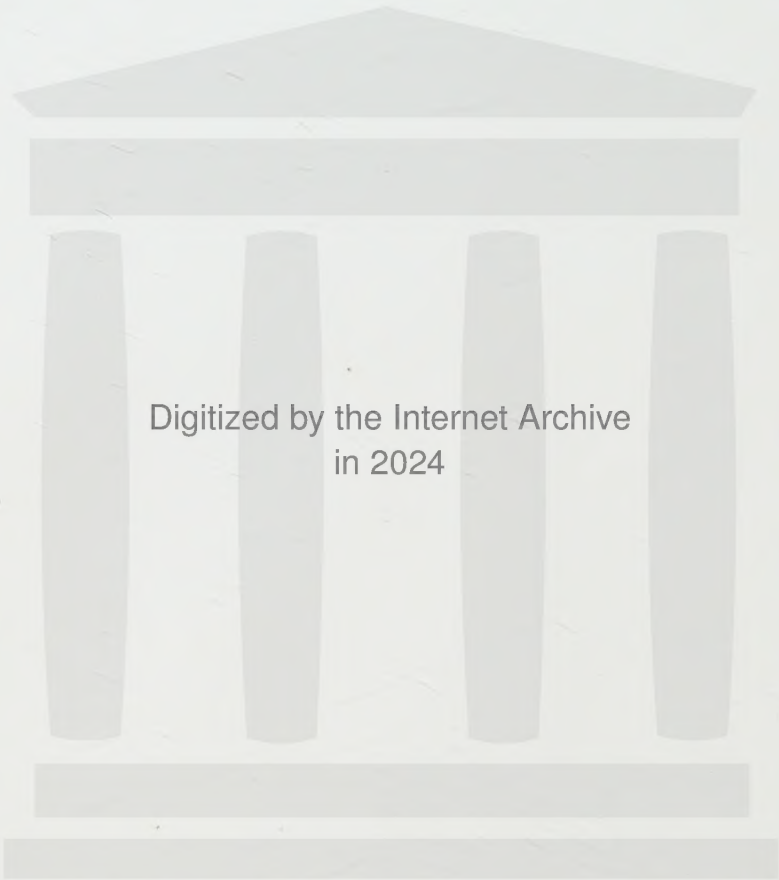
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# MARY AIKENHEAD:

## HER LIFE, HER WORK, AND HER FRIENDS.

GIVING A HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE IRISH SISTERS OF CHARITY.

By S. A.

Sarah Atkinson nee Gaynor -
Born 13th Oct 1823 — Died 8th July 1893.

"Being loath to neglect the memory of Gods friends, more glorious to a Realme than all the victories and triumphs of the world."—CAMPION'S "HISTORIE OF IRELAND."

With Portraits.

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# PREFACE.

THE reverend superioress of the Sisters of Charity having kindly entrusted to me the Annals of the Congregation and many original documents and letters, I have compiled the memoirs of Mrs. Aikenhead, and the notices of the institutions which she and her successor founded, principally from these materials. While I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the Mother-general for these sources of information, and for the considerate liberty which she allowed me in using them—a liberty which saved a great deal of embarrassment to a secular pen—I wish also to express my indebtedness to more than one of her religious children who afforded me no less valuable aid, by procuring information otherwise inaccessible to me, and by drawing for my advantage from their own stores of memory.

Under these circumstances the work, originally undertaken as a labour of love, did not, in its progress, lose that character. There was not, indeed, much to do save to tell the story in all straightforwardness. Comments on the

writer's part would have been superfluous, or worse; for, to use the words of St. Augustine, which I find at hand, thus rendered into English:—"Did I wish to praise this morality, this life, this Order, this institute, I am not able to do so worthily; and I fear I should seem to consider that the thing as simply stated could not by itself be pleasing, were I to think that the buskin of the panegyrist should be added to the simplicity of the narrator."

S. A.

*Dublin, April* 30, 1879.

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"Nothing is stated rashly; copious notes and references bear witness to the writer's industry and conscientiousness; and it is worth observing that all historical statements made here agree very remarkably with those of Mr Lecky, though S.A. has sought information from rare memoirs, books of travel now not easily found, antiquated "tours" made by Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Italians, who visited Ireland in the days of her trouble and gave their impressions to the world; while the author of the "History of England in the XVIII Century" has gone for his facts to the State papers and public records lately made accessible to the world. For all who enjoy a brilliant and picturesque bit of historical writing where much that is interesting is condensed into small space, we recommend the perusal of the Introductory sketch which, with

## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

a backward glance over times just gone by, leads up to the moving cause of Mary Aikenhead's charitable work." .. The Pen - London -

# INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

## Ireland's Penal Days.

### I.

"Men ask what scope is left for hope
To one who has known her story:—
I trust her dead! Their graves are red;
But their souls are with God in glory."
*Inisfail.*—Aubrey de Vere.

NO country has ever had so many beautiful and mystic names as the island whose eastern coast "doth face wilde Cambres cliffes," and whose western shores—for all their rampart line of towering headlands and mountains in multitudinous array—are broken into wide estuaries by the long roll of the Atlantic surge, or worn into tranquil havens by the spent-wave's rise and fall. In poetic language it is at one time invested with ancestral dignity, and called the Ancient Land; while, again, every epithet proper to vigorous and immortal youth is bestowed upon it in turn. Fancy long ago associated the Western Isle with the glory of the sun-god, whose chariot sinks into the main of waters, not so far beyond, but that, posted on a beetling crag, you might hear the hissing of the fiery wheels.[1] The early colonists, first sighting their new home as a dense forest rising out of the illimitable sea, called it the Woody Isle. Long before the sons of Milesius, with sails full of the southern breeze, had reached the object of their adventurous expedition, it received the name of Inisfail, or the Isle of Destiny.

[1] Poem of Hadrianus Junius, quoted by Camden.

It was the Ierna of the Greeks, the Juverna of the Romans, the Sacred Isle of Druidic countries. Successive generations styled it the Noble Isle; called it Erie, after a Danan queen; and Scota, after a Milesian princess. In bardic times it was the Land of Song; and for centuries it was distinguished throughout Christendom as the Island of Saints and Scholars.

As time wore on, however, there ceased to be any further bestowal of beautiful names; the old ones lost their significance, or were uttered only in sad undertones. Vexed with internal sanguinary strife, ravaged by the Danes, devastated by the Anglo-Normans, there was little nobleness left then in the land. The woods were destroyed in the wars, or cut down to deprive "the thieves and rogues" (that is to say, the plundered natives) of the only shelter that had remained to them. The peaceful abode of saints was converted into the arena where hosts of martyrs suffered. In fine, the Erie of the Gaels became the Ireland of the English; a heritage of woe was all that remained to her; nought survived for national pride to feed on, save memories bitter-sweet, and some few cherished names.

But then, memories have often in this land done service for hopes, and names have had power in them to defy the mailed hand and the coercive law. Such danger to the foreign interest lurked in the slogans of the Irish chieftains that an Act of Parliament was passed prohibiting the use of the words *Shanet-abo*, *Crom-abo*, and other "cryes which do greatly savour of the Scythian barbarism." Adventurers, sitting down on the estates of the outlawed owners, and cogitating schemes for reducing the "Wilde Irishe" to civility, urgently recommended that all the O's and Mac's which the heads of septs had taken to their names should be utterly forbidden and extinguished. The Irish were commanded to give up their own names, and assume instead the name of some town, trade, colour, or office. Among the reproaches incurred by the degenerate English settlers, who took up with "that brutish nation," the native race, preferring the manners and customs of the Irishry to the civility of their own countrymen (the "introducers of all good things in Ireland") was this, that they forgot their country, and had quite shaken off their own names.

Gradually the pride which the Gaels of Ireland had taken in the beauty, the sanctity, the scholarly renown of their native land, gave place to another sentiment—a feeling more personal and more intense. Their exultation changed to pity, and their national sympathies became transfigured into a devotion vowed to constancy and sorrow. Personified as a woman beautiful and sad, the wolf-dog crouching at her feet, and the silent harp beside her, their country became associated in their thoughts with all they held most sacred—with their religious faith and with their family affections. "The Irish delight," says Augustin Thierry, "in regarding their country as a being capable of

inspiring affection and reciprocating attachment. They love to address her without pronouncing her name, and to mingle with the austere and perilous devotion, of which she is the object, whatever is tenderest and happiest in the heart's affections. Veiled beneath these cherished illusions, they conceal from themselves the reality of the danger to which the patriot is exposed, and beguile their soul with pleasurable fancies while awaiting the onslaught of battle: like those Spartan warriors, who wreathed their brow with flowers ere they marched out to perish at Thermopylæ." [1]

During two centuries the bards, long renowned for their "sweet inventions and most wittie layes," employed their gift of song in the composition of poems, which, without the key that history affords, might pass for love songs pure and simple. But the passionate devotion vowed by the minstrel is dedicated, not to the fair daughters of Erie, but to the mourning motherland, which, under names of hidden significance, is apostrophised in glowing Gaelic verse:—

"All day long, in unrest,
To and fro do I move.
The very soul within my breast
Is wasted for you, love!
The heart—in my bosom faints
To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen! &c.

"Woe and pain, pain and woe,
Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
Like to the mournful moon.
But yet—will I rear your throne
Again in golden sheen;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen, &c.

"Over dews, over sands,
Will I fly, for your weal:
Your holy, delicate white hands
Shall girdle me with steel.
At home—in your emerald bowers,
From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen, &c.

"Oh! the Erne shall run red
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,

[1] "Dix ans d'Etudes Historiques."

And gun-peal, and slogan cry,
Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
The Judgment Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen!"[1]

Erin's worst enemies have often found it dangerous to meet her in this guise face to face, and, whether they would or would not, have been constrained to pay her respect, and to exchange the accents of vituperation for tones of gentler address. So was it with Edward Spenser. "I doe much pity that sweet land," he says, "to be subject to so many evills as I see more and more to be layde upon her, and doe half beginne to thinke that it is her fatall misfortune, above all other countreyes that I know, to be thus miserably tossed and turmoyled with these variable stormes of affliction."

Finally came the midnight hour, so dark and drear that men almost gave up the hope of another morning. To the horrors of the day had succeeded the despondence of the night: even Dark Rosaleen's lover had ceased his song. Yet some there were who would not let the torpor of despair steal over them: who stood firmly rooted in a trust for which they had no earthly warrant, and sleeplessly watched what they could not defend. With unerring instinct they apprehended signs devoid of import to the crowd, and listened for the throb of a heart which was broken but not stilled. As there were guardians in the night, so were there watchers in the cold gray morning. And these, gazing at the desolate plains, and lifting their eyes to the holy hills, saw a verdant mantle enfolding the ruins; a green carpet spreading over the graves; the scarred and blood-stained surface brightening with the promise of a seed-field planted in sorrow. Mourners and lovers, they saw in the indestructible fertility of the soil the prophecy of a resurgence wonderful and near. Accepting the omen, their hearts grew strong in hope; and embodying in one word their faith and their desire, they gave to the country a new name: they called it the Green Island.[2]

[1] Translated from the Irish by James Clarence Mangan.

[2] Dr. Drennan, the poet of the United Irishmen, was the first who gave Ireland the title of the Emerald Isle. In his famous poem, beginning, "When Erin first rose from the dark-swelling flood, God blessed the green island," &c., and which was written in 1795, he apostrophises the sons of green Erin in verses quoted day after day in various climes from that date to this. The term Emerald, or Green, immediately became associated with the name of this country, and he jealously guarded his claim to the original use of the epithet which describes, as he says, the prime natural beauty of the land, and its inestimable value. In ancient Erin, as we read in Connellan's edition of the "Annals of the Four Masters," p. 512, green banners were not more in favour than those of other colours. The favourite colour was red, whence the country got the title of Ireland of the Red Banners. The Sun-Burst, or flag on which were represented the sun and its rays, was also

The study of Irish history generally proves an ungrateful task to those who write, as well as to those who read its pages. One author notes the sad sameness of the narrative, another its weltering confusion. "The pages of Irish history," says a great Englishman of our own day, "have been stained with tears and blood."[1] "It is a long agony," writes another, "of which the only interest lies in its long-deferred close."[2] And, truth to say, as a record of events during seven hundred years, nothing could be more harrowing, for there is little variety, except in the nature and intensity of the calamity that overwhelmed the nation at successive periods. The real interest lies where the chronicler hardly seeks for it: in the private story, so to speak, of the native population which resisted, and successfully, all the efforts that were made to exterminate it out of the land, or to crush it into an indistinguishable characterless mass. Survival under such circumstances is in itself astonishing. But the wonder increases when we see, for generation after generation, the forlorn hope going out to die; and again, for generation after generation, the ranks closing in to defy annihilation by sheer force of endurance; and when, more than this, the Irish people are seen coming forth at last from the fiery ordeal with the loss of but few of their best characteristics, and with so much original vigour still remaining as perceptibly to affect social and political currents in other Irelands beyond the seas.[3] A journey through the by-paths of Irish history oftentimes better repays the trouble than a march along its well-worn highways; and a study of individual life affords betimes a truer insight than a register of death-struggles in battle-fields or parliaments. Sad though the tale may be it does not fail in human interest, while here and there it affords a clue to labyrinths hitherto untracked, and lights up lengths of dreary records with signal fires that flash along the line.

Anyhow it is necessary to cast a retrospective glance across the two centuries that precede our own era, if we would understand the revolution through which Ireland has been passing in these latter days. The significance of the fresh verdure of the green isle escapes obser-

used by the warriors of the Gael. Richard II. of England, as Mr. Gilbert tells us in his "History of the Viceroys of Ireland," p. 269, wishing to conciliate the native chiefs, laid aside the hostile banners of England, quartered with leopards and fleur-de-lis, and "substituted flags, bearing a golden cross, on an azure ground, surrounded by five silver birds, said to have been the arms of his patron saint, Edward the Confessor. The Irish are represented to have held in reverence the memory of the 'Confessor,' whose queen, Edith, was sister to Driella, wife of Donagh O'Brien, King of Munster." The first regularised corps that carried the green flag was, if we mistake not, the Irish Legion, organised by Napoleon in 1803, and which alone of the foreign regiments was entrusted with the eagle of France. The green banner borne by the Irish Legion had on it a representation of a harp without a crown. During the late American war the green banners of the Irish Brigades were borne with honour through many a sanguinary and historic day.

[1] Mr. John Bright. [2] Mr. Goldwin Smith, late Professor of History at Oxford.

[3] "A nation," says Edmund Burke, "is a moral essence, not a geographical description."

vation, unless the nature and previous condition of the soil are borne in mind. From the arrival of Henry II. to the reign of Elizabeth it has been truly said the country had not enjoyed seven years of tranquillity at any one period; and for forty years of that queen's reign a terrific war had been raging in Ireland. True, the war of the Desmonds had ended in the subjugation of Munster, and the fertile lands of the South had been confiscated to the Crown. The native population were systematically starved out, and when that process proved too slow, men, women, and children were driven into buildings, which were then set on fire, so that "in a short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentifull countrey suddenly left voyde of man and beast." Circular letters were addressed to families in every part of England, inviting younger sons to undertake the plantation of Desmond, and promising to the new settlers large grants of land, on condition that no Irish should be allowed to dwell within their bounds.[1] By-and-by Tyrone's rebellion in the North assumed a still more formidable character; the South was in commotion again; and there was no peace in any corner of the land. War-tried generals at the head of the finest army in Europe were despatched to Ireland; and sums of money, far exceeding the revenue of England at that time, and equal in value to about thirty millions sterling of our circulation, were expended in the effort to crush rebellion, root out the Catholic religion, and trample the Irishry into the dust. Hard was the task, and bitterly did the Earl of Essex, when charged with the conduct of the enterprise, lament his "banishment and prescription to the cursedest of all islands." The rebels were "so many and so framed to be soldiers," as he said, when writing to the queen, "that the war of force would be great, costly, and long." How dear the failure cost the favourite, history tells. Others succeeded better. When slaughtering in the field was not practicable, the governors of the queen's strongholds issued forth, as opportunity served, to lay waste the adjoining lands, and burn the towns and castles in which the native population had taken refuge. At length the country was reduced to so dreadful a condition, that her majesty was assured that little was left for her to reign over in Ireland but carcasses and ashes.

The queen stormed, and swore her royal father's favourite oaths; but Tyrone, that "ungrateful viper," would not submit; the earl would not even ask for terms. Tired of a long and expensive contest, the statesmen of England desired to offer honourable conditions to the enemy; but Elizabeth was by this time as impracticable as O'Neill himself. "Her majesty," says one who knew the feeling of the court, "has a prejudice in her own thoughts that he would insult her

[1] For an account of the Munster undertakers, and the grants they obtained, see D'Arcy M'Gee's "History of Ireland," vol. ii.

when it came to the upshot, and so her opening herself by offer of a pardon would return unto her a double scorn." The question was finally decided by the death of the queen, whose last days were spent raving of Essex and fuming over the Irish war. Orders were sent to the Lord Deputy to keep the event secret in Ireland, and make peace at once with the Earl of Tyrone. Advantageous and honourable conditions were proposed, and O'Neill, arriving at the castle of Mellifont, made submission to Lord Mountjoy, little suspecting that he bent his knee to the representative of a sovereign whom death had already discrowned, and summoned into the presence of the Eternal Judge.

By one of the Articles of Mellifont, the free exercise of their religion was guaranteed to the Irish. No such liberty, however, was tasted by them, even experimentally. One of the first acts of James I. was to order a gaol delivery in Ireland, from which murderers and papists were specially excluded. The "priests were banished, and severe penalties inflicted on such as should harbour or entertain them. All Catholics were obliged to assist at the Protestant church service every Sunday and holiday; and those who had been called 'imps of Antichrist,' &c., for listening to a Latin Mass, which they did not understand, were now forced to listen to an English liturgy, which they, being Irish, understood quite as little."[1] Those who had neglected to appear at church were condemned to pay a fine of one shilling on each occasion; the collectors exacted ten shillings more under the head of fees, and the taxation of recusant papists became a source of considerable revenue to the extortionate officials.

This attempt to hunt the poor Irish to church was followed by a more gigantic and successful essay to sweep them from off the land. James's favourite scheme was to do for the northern province what had been done, only in an inferior degree, for Munster. He accomplished what is generally called the Plantation of Ulster. The ancient proprietors were dispossessed, and a new race of landowners was created. The Protestant Primate was endowed with 43,000 acres; the Dublin University received a grant of 30,000 acres; the lord deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester, who planned and carried out the enterprise, was rewarded with a chieftain's patrimony; a host of Scottish settlers obtained lots varying in extent from 1,000 to 2,000 acres; and the London companies—the guilds of skinners, tanners, and other trades—were constituted legal owners of close on 300,000 acres in the six northern counties.[2] Wholesale spoliation, however, was not

[1] "Memoirs of Captain Rock."

[2] The Rev. George Hill, the chronicler of this chapter of Irish history, sums up the sad narrative in the following words:—"But the paradise of plenty if not of peace to which these strangers at times attained was only secured by a very heavy and dreadful sacrifice of the interests of Ireland as a nation; for to this settlement in Ulster may be traced the awful scenes and events of the ten years' civil war commencing in 1641, the horrors of the revolutionary struggle in 1690, and the re-awakening of these horrors in 1798. The dragon's teeth, so plentifully

confined to Ulster. In Wicklow, the ancient sept of the O'Byrnes were dispossessed under circumstances of exceptional atrocity; the O'Farrells were robbed of estates, including the county of Longford; flaws in titles were discovered by professional experts, and choice portions of Wexford, of the King's County, and of the Queen's County were seized for the Crown. Imagination can hardly conceive the excess of misery thus entailed on a people so sensitive as the Irish to local associations, and so passionately attached to their homes. In a memorial presented to the Government of that day it is stated that many of the ejected landowners lost their reason in their inability to support so terrible a misfortune; and that others, when they felt the approach of death, caused some of their friends to bring them out of their beds to have abroad the sight of the hills and fields they lost in the said plantation.[1]

Many of the nobility and gentry whose lands had been taken from them got off to the Continent, and offered their swords to the Catholic sovereigns. The reputation of the Irish soldiers stood high in foreign states, the services of the exiles were willingly accepted, and some of the expatriated chiefs returned before long to Ireland to enlist a large force for the King of Spain, who was at that time forming an Irish legion. James, well pleased to clear the country of so many native swordsmen, granted leave for the levies to be made; while his Irish subjects, equally anxious to escape from the paternal rule, gladly enlisted in the army of his most Catholic majesty. On this occasion, as we are told, great terror was excited in the Pale by the assembling of bands of Irishmen, preparatory to their embarkation, under the sons of their ancient chieftains, then acknowledging allegiance to a foreign king.[2] Those who could not get away from a place which had, indeed, been made for them an island of evil destiny, were now decimated by a pestilence which succeeded the scarcity caused by the destruction of the crops in the late war. So that the multitude, to quote the words of the then Attorney-General, Sir John Davies, were "brayed, as it were, in a mortar with sword, famine, and pestilence together," and it was looked on as impossible that the Irish could ever again rise up in rebellion.

There still remained, however, a field for spoliation on an extensive scale in the province of Connaught, whose warlike population, led on by the descendants of the Milesian princes and the representatives of the old English settlers, had made a last desperate struggle

sown in this Ulster Plantation, have, indeed sprung up at times with more than usually abundant growth, yielding their ghastly harvests of blood and death on almost every plain, and by almost every river-side, and in almost every glen of our northern province.—"Historical Account of the Plantation of Ulster," p. 590.

[1] See Mr. Prendergast's "Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland," 2nd edition, p. 47.

[2] See Mr. Haverty's "History of Ireland," pp. 514, 515, in which original papers of great interest in connexion with this subject are quoted.

to preserve their religion and their independence, and were, in fact, only recently subdued. A fair beginning was accordingly made by James I., in planting west of the Shannon; and some families were brought over from England and settled on choice domains which once had been abbeylands, the patrimony of native chiefs, or the estates of old English grantees. Death, however, put an end to the king's progress in this work of predilection, and Connaught enjoyed a respite, until, in the succeeding reign, Lord Deputy Wentworth undertook to raise money in the West, and to found there "a noble English plantation." A commission was appointed to inquire into defective titles, with a view of establishing the right of King Charles I. to every estate in Connaught. Cases of inquiry were brought before a jury who had been duly informed of the decision they were to arrive at, and of the severe penalties that would be inflicted in the event of any hesitancy, or obscureness of judicial vision on their part. Under these circumstances, the king's title to the whole of Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon, and Connaught generally, was satisfactorily established. The speculation turned out a lucrative one, for the proprietors paid large sums of money into the king's exchequer for the privilege of holding their own lands under new patents from the Crown. Here and there jurors did hold out, and refused to lend their sanction to the spoliation. But this, too, was turned to profitable account under Lord Wentworth's management. Some Galway gentlemen, having proved refractory as jurors, were summoned to the Castle of Dublin, and fined £4,000 each, while the High Sheriff of the county, being unable to pay the fine, was thrown into prison, and died in bonds.[1]

Other means were resorted to for supplying the royal treasury from Ireland. No landowner in the country was allowed to feel his right secure. The Earl of Ormond was glad to compound for a portion of his estates. The Earl of Kildare was sent to prison for refusing a similar composition. The Earl of Cork was compelled to pay a heavy fine for his intrusion into lands originally granted to the Church. Not even the Ulster planters were safe; the London companies paid no less than £70,000 for liberty to hold their Derry estates.[2] Cajoled into the belief that in the event of their supporting the king with liberal subsidies of men and money, liberty of worship and other favours would be granted to them, the Catholics voted supplies with such promptness and profusion that the lord deputy could not conceal his astonishment. Thousands of pounds were transferred to the exhausted exchequer, but the expected "graces" were never enjoyed by the subjects of the faithless king.

[1] "They (refractory jurors in general) were censured in the Castle chamber in great fines; sometimes pilloried, with loss of ears, and bored through the tongue, and sometimes marked in the forehead with a hot iron, and other infamous punishments."—"Commons Journals" vol. i., p. 307. See also Lingard's "History of England," vol. vii., ch. v.

[2] D'Arcy M'Gee's "History of Ireland," vol. ii.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary efforts that had been made to bring about the pacification of Ireland, the country was not tranquillised. Neither the beggared gentry nor their children ever became reconciled to the new order of things; nor were the meaner people content to see aliens in race, language, and religion, take the place of their ancient chieftains. In 1641, broke out the great rebellion, and for eleven years the island was literally "one great battle-field and scene of slaughter." All the horrors of the Elizabethan wars were renewed. Together with arms and military stores, scythes and reaping-hooks were provided for the troops, that the soldiers might cut down the standing corn, and starve the Irish into submission. Towns, villages, and the peasants' huts were given up to the flames, and Sir Charles Coote's men had orders to slay the population indiscriminately, and to spare no infants above a span long. The tumultuous mustering of the ancient Irish, the old English, the new settlers, the confederates, the Duke of Ormond's men; and the ever-changing combinations and dissolutions of these several parties, together with the massacres and reprisals which were of everyday occurrence, form an historical phantasmagoria terrible and bewildering: into which a ghastly order was introduced by the appearance on the scene of Oliver Cromwell, Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary forces.

Drogheda, Wexford, and Callan, having been made the scene of hideous massacres, and the whole country over-run and wasted, Cromwell, who was by that time Lord Protector, undertook the final settlement of Ireland, in accordance with a plan which, for comprehensiveness and boldness, cast all previous schemes into the shade. Classed under general heads, the design was simple enough. The military men were to be cleared out of the country; by killing or driving into exile all ecclesiastics, the Catholic religion was to be destroyed; the remnant of the nobility and gentry, hunted into a wasted region enclosed between the Shannon and the sea, were to be reduced by poverty and hardship to the peasant class; as many of the young and vigorous Irish as could possibly be shipped off, were to be transported to the West India islands. And the country thus cleared was to be planted with the English adventurers who had advanced money to carry on the war, and the soldiers of the Commonwealth to whom large arrears of pay were owing.

Cromwell, on the defeat of the Irish army, as we read in Mr. Prendergast's "Cromwellian Settlement," had hoped to get the principal commanders delivered into his hands, and a price, varying from £200 to £500, was set on the head of every field officer, in the expectation that the common soldiers would seize so good an opportunity of enriching themselves. No one did so, however; the heads were not brought to the authorities; and, the attempt having failed, the outstanding corps were allowed to transport themselves to other countries

or to engage in the service of any state in amity with the Commonwealth. Agents of the foreign powers—many of them Irish gentlemen holding high rank in the armies of the Catholic sovereigns—passed over into Ireland to enlist the disbanded troops, and found no difficulty in rallying the men around their standard. Early in 1653, as the historian of this period furthermore tells us, Don Ricardo White shipped off from the southern and western ports 7,000 men for the King of Spain ; and later in the same year, Colonel Christopher Mayo took away 3,000 more for the same service ; Lord Muskerry took 5,000 to the King of Poland ; Colonel Edward Dwyer went with 3,500 to serve under the Prince of Condé.[1] Many other levies were made, and the ports were crowded with these military exiles waiting for ships to bear them away from their country, their families, and their friends. The officers thought to take with them the wolf-dogs that followed at their heels, but the tide-waiters had orders to seize the dogs and send them to the public huntsman, for, since the desolation of the country, the wolves had greatly increased in number, and were invading the precincts of the towns.[2] "Thus," says Sir William Petty, "the chiefest and eminentest of the nobility and many of the gentry have taken conditions from the King of Spain, and have transported 40,000 of the most active spirited men, most acquainted with the dangers and discipline of war."

Multitudes of women and children were, on the departure of the swordsmen, left without provision or protection. They were not, however, long suffered to cumber their native soil. Slaves were wanted for the sugar plantations in the island of Barbadoes, which, after being wasted by the Spaniards, had fallen into the possession of the English. Contracts were entered into with the Bristol sugar merchants, who sent over agents to take into their charge prisoners of war, offenders in custody, women, orphans, and such as had no visible means of livelihood. Orders were issued to the local authorities to deliver up to these agents such persons as were thus specified ; and each batch, on being mustered, was driven down to the seaports to be put on board the vessels sent round from Bristol to take them off. One of these contracts was for the supply to an English company of 250 women of the Irish nation between the age of twelve and forty-five years, and of 300 men above twelve years of age and under fifty ; and the agents were officially informed that the required number would easily be got in the county of Cork alone. From Galway 1,000 boys and an equal number of girls were shipped in one batch to Jamaica ; "We could well spare them," writes Henry Cromwell, Major-General of the Forces in Ireland, in a letter to his father, the Lord Protector, "and who knows but it might be a means of making them Englishmen—I

[1] "Cromwellian Settlement," p. 87. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 309.

mean Christians?" Mr. Prendergast, in noticing these facts, states that 6,400 of the Irish youth were at that time deported to the sugar plantations. He does not give the total number of the transported, which other authorities variously state up to and even beyond 60,000. During four years the Bristol agents were let loose on Ireland, and the work might have been carried on for a still longer period had it not been discovered that the slave dealers, sometimes forgetting the tenor of the bond, kidnapped the children, and enticed or forced on board the women, of the new English colony. A vast number of the transported perished on the outward voyage, many survived but a short time after they were landed in the West India islands; still there remained long years after, scattered among the slave population, the descendants of Cromwell's deported victims, preserving the language, and even the music, of their forefathers' native land.[1]

The next step was to extirpate the Catholic religion by getting rid of the priests, who, notwithstanding the severity of the laws in force against them, were to be found in every part of Ireland.[2]

All ecclesiastics were ordered to depart from the kingdom within twenty days. If any returned they should be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Masters of ships leaving Ireland were commanded to take on board such as should offer themselves. The swordsmen leaving for Spain got leave to take with them "priests, Jesuits, and other persons in Popish orders;" and instructions were given to the governors of gaols to deliver up to the officers on shipboard such ecclesiastics as were in their custody. Many thus got safely away, but a great number remained. Hid in the bogs, wandering in the mountains, concealed in cellars or under the tiles of houses, they were still within reach of the scattered flock who made their way to the knees of the hunted priests to be strengthened with the sacraments, taught, and consoled. Oftentimes assuming strange disguises, priests took up their abode in the very midst of their persecutors. Members of the religious orders were to be met with in the garb of shepherds or ploughmen. One of the Capuchins took a situation as gardener to the chief Protestant in Waterford and freely went about the city, some-

[1] "The first Irish people who found permanent homes in America were certain Catholic patriots banished by Oliver Cromwell to Barbadoes in 1649. . . . In this island, as in the neighbouring Montserat, the Celtic language was commonly spoken in the last century, and, perhaps, it is attributable to this early Irish colonisation that Barbadoes became one of the most populous islands in the world. At the end of the seventeenth century it was reported to contain 20,000 white inhabitants."—D'Arcy M'Gee's "Irish Settlers in America."

[2] What Spenser said of the priests of his day might with at least equal justice be said of their successors in Cromwell's time. "A great wonder to see the oddes which is between the zeale of the Popish priests and the ministers of the Gospell: for they spare not to come out of Spaine, from Rome, and from Remes, by long toyle, and dangerous travayling hither, where they knowe perill of death awayteth them, and no reward or richess is to be found only to draw the people into the Church of Rome."—"View of the State of Ireland.'

times acting as coalporter at the quay. Another priest used to pass the enemy's guards in the guise of a peasant carrying country produce to market. Father Thomas Fitzgerald, a Dominican, dressed himself as a peasant and served the Catholics of Cork during the entire period of Cromwell's usurpation. Father Ford, a Jesuit, took up his abode in a dry spot in the middle of a bog and taught school: his pupils dwelling near him in huts which they built on the little island, where they were as safe as if they were afloat in the ocean; for nothing baffled the troopers so effectually as the bogs, into which the horsemen dared not venture, and through which the Irish could safely travel, treading lightly by ways known only to themselves.

Seeing that the priests still lingered, and that the people would not give them up, the Government resolved to take further measures for their apprehension. It was, therefore, enacted that anyone who neglected to take a priest into custody should be flogged, have his ears cut off, and be cast into prison; while any person who kept up a correspondence or friendship with a priest should suffer death. Five pounds reward was offered for lodging a priest in gaol. The latter provision was looked on as a godsend by the soldiers, who, since the termination of the war, had more time on their hands than they knew what to do with, and were straitened for money while awaiting the payment of their arrears. Turning their attention, therefore, to the less warlike pursuit of priest-hunting, they soon filled the prisons with captives; and disbursements on account of the discovery and apprehension of Popish priests became a heavy item of Government expenditure. Martial law being the only law in vogue, the troopers could enter private houses and go wheresoever they would. They hired spies to give them notice where a quarry might be run down, and they clubbed together to share the dangers of the chase and the profits of the capture. When they succeeded in arresting the harbourer of a priest, as well as the minister of God himself, it was an additional piece of good luck; for they could claim a share of the forfeited possessions of the owner of the house in which the seizure was made. Nor were the officers in any way reluctant to profit by the same opportunity. Mr. Prendergast, who has had under his eye the Treasury orders of that period, notices many instances: among others the case of a captain who claimed the reward for arresting a priest with all his appurtenances and having him brought to Dublin together with the man in whose house he was discovered; and that of an officer who, with his soldiers, laid claim to the goods of five gentlemen who maintained against them a castle in the county of Meath in defence and rescue of a priest supposed to have repaired thither to say Mass.[1] The gaols being now filled to overflowing, it became

[1] "Cromwellian Settlement," p. 322.

necessary to thin the prison population. Some of the priests were publicly executed, others were privately butchered or left to starve in the cells: many, to use Cromwell's own words, were "knocked in the head promiscuously." But the greater number were ordered for removal to the seaports, to be shipped off for Barbadoes. In three years more than 300 ecclesiastics, three bishops among the number, suffered death by the sword or on the scaffold; and more than 1,000, including all the surviving bishops but one (the bedridden bishop of Kilmore), were sent into exile.

After a time, owing to remonstrances made by Catholic princes on the Continent, priests were no longer put to death in Ireland; and for some reason or another transportation to Barbadoes was not again resorted to in their case. Those who were arrested and delivered up to the authorities during the concluding years of the Commonwealth were carried out to islands off West Connaught prepared for their reception. Many of these sufferers had assigned to them as their prison the island of Boffin, lying off Ballinakill, in the county of Mayo, where still stood the ruins of a monastery founded, according to the Venerable Bede, by St. Colman in the seventh century. The island had surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, and was now strongly fortified, having a citadel on which large guns were mounted. Colonel John Honnor was appointed governor, and it was recommended "to exclude all ill-affected Irish out of that island," and to send "an able, pious, and orthodox minister of the Gospell to be settled at Bofin."[1] Others were conveyed to the islands of Arran, thirty miles west of Galway; and, dwelling in huts close by the cyclopean duns of pagan times, and in the midst of the primitive churches and bee-hive dwellings of the early Christian solitaries, were consigned to the mercy of the Puritan soldiers who garrisoned "a citadell in the usurper Cromwell's time erected." The banished priests now took the place of the ancient hermits; and there was a fitness in this, that "Arran of the Saints"—where Columba had sojourned, and Enda had dwelt, and Fridian had studied, and Brendan had gone on pilgrimage—should be the prison of these confessors of the Faith. Great consolation was vouchsafed them, no doubt, in the remembrance of their holy predecessors; they praised God in the ocean solitude, and made their prayer, undisturbed, save by the screaming of the sea-birds and the rush of the breakers thundering upon the cliffs.

So much having been accomplished—the swordsmen exiled, the priests transported, young men and maidens sold into slavery—there still remained an important part of the general plan to be executed. This was the seizure of lands still remaining in the possession of the native race, and of the old English of Ireland, and the removal of the

[1] Dr. Hardiman's notes to "O'Flaherty's West Connaught," pp. 116, 294.

owners to that part of the kingdom over which devastation had swept with most terrific violence. Some of the military chiefs, married men with families, had not gone abroad on the break-up of the Irish army, but remained at home tilling the fields as tenants which once they had owned as lords. Several families of English descent who had taken no part in the late rebellion, or who, perhaps, had signalised their attachment to the Government in a more direct way, still remained on their estates suspecting no danger. But now these too were doomed to suffer in the general overturn. Their estates and their farms were wanted to satisfy the claims of the adventurers and the soldiers, and it was resolved that their Popish principles should not be allowed to contaminate the air in the neighbourhood of the covenanting planters. It was of no avail to plead their English origin. Catholics they certainly were; and the Lord Protector was determined to make them Irish too, by community of suffering with the ancient race. Without difficulty a law was passed to meet this exigency; and on the 16th September, 1653, a proclamation was issued commanding the Catholic inhabitants of the transplantable class (which was made to include nearly every soul above the peasant rank) to remove to Connaught with their wives, and children, and servants, and cattle, before the 1st May following; after which date any such man, woman, or child found in any other part of the kingdom might be shot by those who met them. The province destined for the grave of the Irish Catholics had been fitly prepared for them by the bloody passage of Sir Richard Bingham, and the havoc of the younger Sir Charles Coote. For the most part it was a wilderness of desert fields and roofless houses: the scant population having been reduced by war and famine to a condition too horrible to be here described. Some parts that had escaped the general devastation were marked off for English families to plant on; and the Clanricarde estate of 6,000 acres at Portumna was reserved for Lord Henry Cromwell. The towns were held exclusively for the Puritan settlers, and a belt, varying from one mile to four miles wide, along the sea-shore and the right bank of the Shannon, was apportioned to the soldiery; forts and garrisons were established on the borders; so that the territory, surrounded as it was by water, except for a line of about ten miles, formed the most secure and dreary penal colony that could well be imagined.

Orders were issued that fathers and heads of families should proceed, before the 30th January, 1654, to Athlone or to Loughrea, where sat the Government Commissioners,[1] whose business it was to assign

[1] "The Government was administered in the name of the Parliament of England by Commissioners, called "Commissioners of the Parliament of England for the Affairs of Ireland," formed into a Council Board consisting of the Lord Deputy and the other Commissioners with powers over the Irish almost unlimited. Their orders, declarations, and proclamations seem to have had the force of law. The Council Board sat ordinarily at Cork House,

them lands competent to the stock possessed by them, and by the tenants and friends who were to transplant with them—care being taken that such lands should not be within five miles of any town.[1] "They were to build huts against the arrival of their wives and families, who were to follow on the 1st May. The Commissioners were to be guided by a statement, or particular, which each proprietor, before leaving home, was to present to the revenue officer of the precinct for his certificate. It set forth the abode, names, ages, stature, colour of the hair, and other marks of distinction of the transplanter and his family, and of all his tenants and friends who were to accompany him into Connaught, together with the number of their cattle, quantity and quality of tillage and other substance. From the gray-haired sire of seventy to the blue-eyed daughter of four years old, the family portraiture is given in these transplanters' certificates. Sometimes there is a long list of tenants and friends, and sheep and cattle, accompanying the chief proprietor of the district into exile, like the pictures of the descent of the Israelites into Egypt. In others a landlord, who, perhaps, had rendered himself distasteful to his tenants, had none to accompany him; for tenants were not required to adhere to their landlord; they might sit down in Connaught as tenants under the State."[2]

Thus, in Mr. Prendergast's vivid pages we see sadly journeying to their exile in the West the Talbots of Malahide, Lord Trimleston of Meath, Walter Cheevers, the owner of a castle and large estate at Monkstown, Lord Dunboyne from Tipperary, Dame Katherine Morris of the same county, Lady Mary Hamerton of Roscrea, Lady Fitzgerald from her castle on the Boyne, Viscount Ikerrin of Lismalin Park, Lord Roche of Fermoy, and a host of others. The immediate ancestors of some of the transplanted gentry had been conspicuous for their zeal in crushing the Irish in former rebellions. The father of one of the transplanted lords was described as "an emblem of English fidelity;" and a certain William Spenser, now ordered as an Irish Papist to remove from Cork to Connaught, was the grandson of the Edmund Spenser who, a settler on the lands of the Earl of Desmond,

or the Castle of Dublin, but made occasional tours, and sat more than once at Kilkenny and Athlone. . . . Besides the daily routine of every Government, the Commissioners had the regulation of the setting down of the soldiers as planters, and were required to arrange and settle the differences between the several regiments and companies in their disputes concerning lands, and those which arose between the soldiers and adventurers who were joint settlers with the soldiery. They had also to effect the transplantation of the Irish into Connaught, and to answer all the petitions of the Irish."—"Tenth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in Ireland," p. 25.

[1] All husbandmen and others of the inferior sort, not possessed of lands or goods exceeding the value of £10, were to have a free pardon, on condition, also, of transporting themselves across the Shannon.— D'Arcy M'Gee's "History of Ireland," vol. ii.

[2] "Cromwellian Settlement," p. 104.

drew the inspiration for his Faery Queen from the lovely scenery round Kilcolman Castle, but felt so little for the unspeakable misery of the Irish, whose sufferings he witnessed, as to hope that by a hard restraint, the destruction of the crops, and so forth, they might be reduced to such a condition that "they would quickly consume and devour one another."

Resolutely though the Government was bent on carrying these orders into execution, transplanting was discovered to be a work of peculiar difficulty. Petitions poured in from all sides. An aged nobleman pleads that he is too weak to travel on foot to Connaught; women and children, ordered to proceed westward, as being the widows and orphans of transplantable persons, crave exemption; the owner of Luttrelstown, who once had given proof of his strong attachment to the English interest, begs a respite up to a certain date, that he may occupy the stables of his own mansion, and till his own fields; John Talbot asks leave to return to his castle at Malahide to dispose of his corn and other goods. So strict was the imprisonment in Connaught, that Lord Trimleston, and others who might have occasion to pass to the Leinster side of the Shannon, could not cross the bridge of Athlone without a special order. The difficulty, therefore, was not in keeping imprisoned those who were already within the cordon, but in driving westward the multitude who still lingered near their old homes. "The Irish choose death rather than remove from their former habitations," says a cotemporary, "but the State is resolved to see it done." To invoke the aid of heaven in this distressing crisis, Government ordered a general fast, and then proceeded to take vigorous measures for the discovery and arrest of transplantable persons. Courts-martial were appointed to try the laggards, some of whom were transported to the West Indies for not having taken their way to Connaught; and some were despatched to the other world for a similar offence. In Kilkenny, two men were condemned for this crime, "which makes the rest to hasten" observes the chronicler. A court-martial, sitting in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, sentenced a gentleman to be hanged with placards on his breast and back announcing that he forfeited his life "for not transplanting."[1]

Meanwhile, the state of things in Connaught was quite indescribable when the Irish from the other provinces had been driven into the wilderness, where the commissioners were holding their court and the Puritan soldiery mounting guard over the Romish idolators. "With famine and pestilence, despair seized upon the afflicted natives; thousands died of starvation and disease; others cast themselves from precipices, whilst the walking spectres that remained seemed to

[1] These sad petitions, and still more moving incidents, are to be found in "The Cromwellian Settlement."

indicate that the whole *plantation* was nothing more than a mighty sepulchre."[1]

While the three favoured provinces were being cleared of the Irish gentry and husbandmen, the cities and towns were undergoing a course of purification by the banishment of their Catholic merchants, traders, and artizans. Most of the sufferers in this instance, also, were the descendants of the settlers who had oftentimes stoutly held those garrisons against the "Irish enemy." They had now in their turn to depart; and to render their settling near the towns impossible, all dwellings within two miles of the walls were thrown down. So thoroughly was the clearance system carried out, that the new inhabitants found their town-quarters a lonesome and inconvenient residence. Hewers of wood and drawers of water were so badly wanted by the strangers, that Government was worried with petitions, praying that Irish artizans and labourers might be allowed to remain; while at the same time many of the poor natives, glad to cling to the old neighbourhood, were hid away by the new comers, who had furthermore to beseech the authorities to permit the Irish doctors to remain undisturbed. In Galway no Catholics were left but the sick and bed-ridden, who, however, were ordered to follow the rest without much delay. There was only one Papist, it is said, left in Dublin in 1651, and he was described as "a chirurgeon, a peaceable man."

Famine and the plague carried on a hideous clearance of their own throughout the country; numbers perished in the ditches; and "the bodies of many wandering orphans, whose fathers had gone to Spain, and whose mothers had died of famine, were preyed upon by wolves." "You might travel twenty or thirty miles," says an eye-witness, "and not see a living creature." It was computed that there perished or disappeared in those years by the sword, and by famine, hardship, and banishment, no fewer than 50,000 of the native race; while the damage done to both parties was estimated by Sir William Petty at £37,000,000 sterling. Lord Clarendon was of opinion that the sufferings of the Irish from the Puritans had never been surpassed, except by those of the Jews in their destruction by Titus. The aspect of the country was a reflex of the desolation that afflicted its inhabitants. Owing to the demolition of the woods, not even enough firing was left in some parts. Boate, describing the face of the country in that day, says that in some parts you might travel whole days long without seeing any woods or trees, except a few about gentlemen's houses. "The great woods," he adds, "which the maps do represent to us upon the mountains between Dundalke and the Nurie, are quite vanished, their being nothing left of them these many yeares since but one only tree, standing close by the highway, at the very top of one of the mountains, so as it

[1] Dr. Moran's "Life of Archbishop Plunket." Intro., p. 53.

may be seen a great way off, and therefore serveth travellers for a mark."[1]

When, therefore, the adventurers and soldiers came to take possession of the lands allotted to them, they found a solitude, indeed, but no paradise. Cromwell's troops, who had been unwilling from the first to serve in Ireland, now showed little inclination to plant in the land they had overrun. Many of them refused, even though bribed with a new suit of clothes and a month's half-pay, to take possession of their Irish estates. Some sold their debentures before they knew where lay the lands that had fallen to their share; some gambled away their fields in ignorance of their value; others were cheated by their officers, who desired to add a soldier's lot to their own domain. Nor were the officers themselves supremely happy when they had taken possession of the mansions and parks, whose rightful owners were starving and shivering in hurdle huts on the far side of the Shannon. Possibly, when they had turned their swords into ploughshares, they regarded rapine and slaughter in a different light, and began to be troubled with feelings of humanity. They could not help commiserating the remnant of the gentry who lingered in a beggared condition near their own ancestral domains; they connived at the disobedience of the unhappy gentlemen, and concealed them when a search was made for transplantable persons. They were at a loss for labourers; at a loss for the poor Irish who had been transported or transplanted, or who had fled to the bogs and mountains to be neighbourly only in a dangerous way.

The State expected that Protestants of every nation would gratefully accept an invitation to take up their abode in this Island of the Blest; and in the most liberal manner non-Catholics throughout the world were made as free of Ireland as were the natives of England. Exiled Bohemians, well-affected persons from the Low Countries, the Vaudois of Piedmont, were invited to settle in the land of the Gael; it was even imagined that the lately expatriated English would re-cross the Atlantic and sit down in Ireland with the Puritan planters.[2] However, the invited did not come. Few besides the Lord Protector Cromwell looked with complacency on the new Ireland his genius had created.

At the Restoration, the nobility and gentry hoped to get back their estates, and began to creep forth from Connaught and take farms in the neighbourhood of their ancient patrimony. Many of them had claims on the king, which it was not supposed he would disallow. The disappointment that ensued is a well-known chapter in Irish history. Some three or four families, who had influential friends at court, were reinstated in their possessions, but the Cromwellian settlers, as

[1] "Irelands Naturall History."

[2] See Lingard's "History of England," vol. viii., ch. v.; and other authorities.

a body, were not disturbed. They displayed surprising indifference about the change of dynasty; rigid principles conveniently gave way before attachment to the land; they were, in a word, left on their plantations, as a trusty garrison to maintain the English interests in Ireland. In higher circles unprincipled men changed sides with amazing celerity; made themselves useful in the new condition of the empire; and were handsomely rewarded at the expense of old and faithful adherents of the crown.

Charles II.'s dislike to religious persecution was well known. Whenever his wishes were consulted, the laws against Catholics were suffered to fall into disuse. But as the persecuting statutes were not repealed, they were put in execution whenever it suited the temper of men in authority to enforce them. Much depended on the disposition of the lord deputy, for the time being, and on the governors of the provinces. Lord Berkeley, when acting as viceroy, allowed ecclesiastics to exercise their functions, and had many Catholics in his court. His successor, the Earl of Essex, was described as "a wise and prudent man, who does not willingly give annoyance to those who live in peace." Lord Charlemont, in the North, protected the Catholics, and was a friend of the Primate, Dr. Oliver Plunket, whom he invited to administer the sacrament of confirmation in the court of his official residence, instead of going out to the bogs to assemble there the scattered flock. But, on the other hand, the Earl of Kingstown, Governor of Connaught, expelled the clergy from Galway; and the Earl of Orrery, President of Munster, would not allow priests to say Mass in Cork or Limerick, and they were obliged to go out into the country to offer the holy Sacrifice. On the whole, the Catholics were left in peace for some years, and the Primate was able to say that "under the present king there is great tolerance and sufficient connivance."[1] In the end, however, the bigotry excited by the Gunpowder Plot put an end to peace, and led to atrocious proceedings. All ecclesiastics were again ordered to quit the country; bishops and priests fled to the Continent, or hid in the mountains; the Primate was hanged at Tyburn. "They say things are no way amended (as to Catholic natives) since the kings going home," writes Dr. French, Bishop of Ferns, "that change having noe ways bettered theire fortunes, but that their calamities and miseries (soe it is written from many hands) are dayly increased, so as men beaten with scourges in Crumwell's tyme, cry out they are now beaten with scorpions."[2]

With regard to secular affairs generally, the state of Ireland was truly described by the Lord Deputy, the Earl of Essex, when he said:

[1] For these particulars of the state of the Catholics in different parts of Ireland during the reign of Charles II., see the Introduction to Dr. Moran's "Life of Archbishop Plunket."

[2] Preface to "The Unkind Deserter." (1676.)

"This country has been perpetually rent and torn since his majesty's restoration. I can compare it to nothing better than the flinging the reward, on the death of the deer, among the pack of hounds, where everyone pulls and tears where he can for himself."

The only wonder is that, at the Revolution, when Ireland was chosen as the battle-field on which the crown of England was to be fought for, there were men forthcoming numerous and spirited enough to form even the semblance of an army for James II. But it must be remembered that a generation inured to hardships as severe as those of war, had grown to manhood since the Restoration, and that James had, on his accession to the throne, given to the Irish signal proofs of royal favour by appointing Catholics to high civil and military posts, and naming the Earl of Tyrconnell as viceroy of the kingdom. Under the new stimulus of gratitude the Irish became inspirited even to the heroic point, and rallied round the standard of the first King of England who had thus bound them to his cause. Some of the ancient nobility returned from the Continent, and, uniting with representatives of the Catholic gentry still remaining in the country, hastened to enlist troops.[1] Before long fifty regiments were enrolled. Men seemed to start out of the ground; but food, clothing, and munitions of war were not so speedily forthcoming. The French officers, who came over with the king, were astonished at the destitution that everywhere prevailed. There was no bread to be had; the soldiers were living on horseflesh; their pay was a penny a day. Half-armed with pikes and muskets unfit for use, sometimes bareheaded and barefooted, equipped in ragged regimentals, they were ill-prepared to meet in the field the well-fed, well-armed troops of different nationalities, brilliant in their new uniform, which were mustering in the North for service under William of Orange.[2] It was the forlorn hope marching out once more. Victory was impossible under such circumstances, even to those "very great scorners of death," who defended the bridge of Athlone,[3] and who, when cannon balls were served to them at Aughrim, where musket bullets were required, tore the

[1] "A more noble host has seldom been submitted to review. Six of the colonels were peers, as were five of the captains. The other officers were sons of peers, baronets, or heirs of the oldest families as long as they had anything to inherit."—Preface to Dalton's "Illustrations of King James's Army List."

[2] "An unusually strong artillery train attended it (William's army). In new scarlet coats, in breeches of every hue, horse, foot, and dragoons paraded gorgeously."—Colonel Charles Townshend Wilson's "James II. and the Duke of Berwick," p. 292.

[3] "The barricades at the Irish end of the broken arch being burnt by the carcasses, some English grenadiers managed to throw beams across the chasm, and were about to plank them, when from the other side sprang a sergeant and ten soldiers clad in armour. They would destroy the handiwork, or die. Every man of them perished. But in a moment fresh volunteers fastened upon the skeleton platform, and at the cost of all their lives, save two, succeeded in ripping it up and flinging it into the river."—*Ibid.*, p. 295.

buttons from their coats and fired them with the ramrods of their guns in the faces of their assailants.[1]

Withdrawn behind the walls of Limerick, the Irish troops won by their gallant conduct the admiration of their enemies. That brave garrison could not restore to his throne the king whose sovereignty they acknowledged; but in surrendering the city they obtained honourable terms for themselves as military men, and religious liberty, secured by treaty, for their country. Then followed the scene, so often described, when Sarsfield and his men marched out of Limerick, with arms, ammunition, colours flying, and matches lighted; and crossing to the Clare side of the Shannon, withdrew towards the horse camp near the ruins of Quin Abbey, whence they could descry the French fleet of eighteen ships of war, six fire ships, and other vessels of great burden, under the command of M. Chateau Renault, sailing up the river two days late to save the city and the cause. By the military articles of the Treaty of Limerick, the Irish troops were free to return to their homes, to enter the English service, or to volunteer for France. General Ginkle's agents arrived at the camp, offering great inducements to the soldiers to join the army of William of Orange; while M. Tameron, on the part of the French Government, seconded by Sarsfield and the Irish clergy, urged them to adhere to their legitimate sovereign and to follow him to France. Ginkle used the utmost efforts to retain the King's Guards, a noble corps of 1,400 men, for his master; but when they came to the place assigned for separating, the Guards, with the exception of seven men, marched for France. The same thing took place, in a greater or less proportion, in all the other corps, and not long afterwards 19,000 Irish soldiers sailed for the Continent. Of these a considerable part embarked on board M. Chateau Renault's fleet; and English transports, according to stipulation, conveyed away the remainder, of whom 4,500 sailed with Sarsfield from Cork. "Many of these exiles were accompanied by their families, but a great many of the women and children were also left behind, and reduced to a state of utter destitution; the loud wailing at the parting scenes in Limerick and Cork, and on the shores of Kerry, smote the hearts even of their enemies."[2] In Cork great kindness was shown by the Protestant inhabitants to the women and children who were left behind for want of room in the transports sent to take off the men. These helpless families were humanely supported by the citizens until the exiles found means to send for them and settle them in new homes.

Thus the close, like the beginning and the middle of the century, was signalised by the departure for continental states of many thousands of the choice men of Ireland. Between the earlier and the later

[1] See Mr. O'Callaghan's "Green Book."

[2] Mr. Haverty's "History of Ireland," p. 672.

periods there is also another point of resemblance—each was marked by the infraction of a solemn treaty, securing the religious liberty for which the nation had fought so desperately. Parliament paid no respect whatever to the Articles of Limerick, though they had been signed by the Lords Justices and the Commander-in-Chief, ratified by William and Mary, and enrolled in the Court of Chancery. Legislation was now turned with concentrated force to the accomplishment of a work which the sword had been powerless to achieve. The seventeenth century drew to a close, with its butcheries, its confiscations, and its banishments ; and a new era began—an era less sanguinary, but more revolting to humanity—the era, namely, of the Penal Laws.

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## II.

Edmund Burke described "the vicious perfection" of the Penal Code, when he said: "It was a complete system, well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance; and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement, in them, of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man." Another writer remarked, that it required four or five reigns to elaborate it; and this was indeed the fact, for the persecuting statutes of William and Mary were supplemented by the "ferocious Acts of Queen Anne;" while these again were capped by the inhuman legislation of the First and Second Georges. "The memory of this Code," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "will still remain a reproach to human nature, and a terrible monument of the vileness into which nations may be led when their religion has been turned into hatred, and they have been taught to believe that the indulgence of the most malignant passions of man is an acceptable offering to God. For it was a code of degradation and proscription, not only religious and political, but social. It denied the persecuted sect the power of educating their children at home, and at the same time, with an almost maniacal cruelty, it prohibited them from seeking education abroad. It disabled them from acquiring freehold property; it subjected their estates to an exceptional rule of succession—a reproduction, in fact, of that very custom of gavelkind which had been abolished as barbarous, with a view to break them into fragments, and thus destroy the territorial power of the Catholic proprietors. It excluded them from the liberal and influential professions; it took from them the guardianship of their own children ; it endeavoured to set child against parent, and parent against child, by the truly diabolical enactment, that the son of a Papist, on turning Protestant, should dispossess his father of the fee-simple of his estate ; the father's estate, even in that which he had himself acquired, being reduced to a life-interest, while the reversion

vested absolutely in the son, as a reward for his conversion to the true religion." "It would seem," continues the writer, "as though the persecutors had intended almost to exclude their victims from the pale of human society. For, in the case of alleged offences against certain of the Penal Laws, the first principles of criminal justice were deliberately and ostentatiously set aside, by removing the burden of proof from the accuser and casting it on the accused." [1]

Thus, the whole kingdom became for the Catholics a wider Cromwellian Connaught. They were hemmed in on every side. The last sanctuary of peace—their home—was invaded, and the safeguards which the natural virtues had provided for the preservation of domestic order, were fatally endangered. Even to the grave they were pursued; for, by an Act of William and Mary, it was forbidden to Catholics to bury their dead in any monastery, church, or abbey, not used for Protestant service.

All the old laws against the clergy were mercilessly carried out in the early part of the last century. Ecclesiastics were commanded to leave the country; they were declared guilty of high treason if they returned; large bribes were offered to such as would apostatise; and rewards were given for the apprehension of those who would not depart. Magistrates and landlords, over zealous for religion and the law, acted the part of priest-hunters; employed underlings, called "priest-hounds" by the populace, to dog the steps of God's ministers, and seize them in "the act of massing." These outlaws for the faith, "mostly the sons of reduced gentlemen, had tasted of ease and affluence in their younger years, and were accustomed to refinement of manners, and the graces of education; they were now confined to the association of poverty and ignorance, were exposed to the merciless pursuit of priest-catchers, and to the cold and damps and starvation of bogs and caverns." [2]

In pursuing their detestable trade, the priest-catchers became so odious, even to Protestants, that many of the latter gave sanctuary in their houses to the fugitives, protected them when brought before the tribunals, and assisted the Catholics in hunting the informers out of the country.[3] But though the priests might be left for intervals

[1] "Irish History and Irish Character."

[2] Matthew O'Conor's "History of the Irish Catholics," p. 211.

[3] The late Dean Cogan, in his "History of the Diocese of Meath," gives several instances of kindness shown by Protestant families to the hunted priests. Father Clarke of Johnstown found good friends in the Ludlows of Ardsallagh Castle; a boat was at all times at his disposal to ferry him across the Boyne to the castle, whither he was accustomed to fly for shelter when the hounds were on his track. Mr. Waller of Allenstown had Father Barnwell concealed for several weeks in his house; and when any of the people required the last sacraments, a messenger would proceed to Allenstown, pass round the house so as to attract Mr. Waller's attention, and then tell the kind-hearted gentleman that a priest was wanted in such a place. Dr. Plunket, the Vicar-General of the diocese, was saved from a notorious priest-hunter by a gentleman who hid the fugitive in an upper room of his house,

unmolested in their obscurity, they never were safe: the laws might be put in execution at any moment through the agency of private malignity, merciless bigotry, or the make-believe of political expediency. In 1715, they were dragged from the altars and banished the country; in 1744, private houses were searched for them. Father O'Grady, who lived at Derrynane when O'Connell was a boy, had been tried in Tralee on a charge of being a Popish priest;[1] and a Father Malony, who had been informed against and convicted of a similar crime, would have died in gaol, if Lord Shelbourne and his colleagues had not released him at their own risk.[2]

Mass was often said in those evil days in the houses of Catholic gentlemen, or in a retired part of their grounds. Great precautions were necessary, on these occasions, to prevent the intrusion of any person who was not well known to trusty members of the household; for there was a twofold risk in these cases—danger to the officiating minister from the priest-hunters, and danger to the master of the house, whose profession of the Catholic religion and implication in the offence of screening a "Massing Priest," left him at the mercy of any wretch who, by "discovering," might dispossess the proprietor and claim his goods. Vigilance itself was sometimes baffled. On one occasion a man in the guise of a mendicant got into a house where Mass was about to be offered. At first the intruder escaped observation; but the master noticed the stranger, became suspicious, instituted inquiries, and learned to his consternation that the "beggar" was a well-known discoverer. The gentleman lost no time in taking horse for the capital, where he arrived in time to forestall the informer. He saved his estate, but at a terrible cost. He took the oath of abjuration, and was registered as a Protestant.

This system of "discovery" wrought mischief in every direction; for not only had men to guard their property against the arts of professional adepts, but they had to take good care lest they should themselves be compelled to make disclosures fatal to their friends. Flight was sometimes the only means whereby one's own honour, and the rights of one's neighbour could be preserved. Father Kirwan, a Galway Dominican, having been summoned to give evidence against some of his friends, whereby, under the Penal Laws, they would have been deprived of their property, went into voluntary exile, and died abroad in 1736.

which could only be approached by a ladder, removable at pleasure. The aged vicar was so feeble that he could not ascend or descend the ladder without assistance, and yet, in the obscurity of night he would set out to attend sick-calls. Another priest of Meath was often sheltered by the noble family of Headfort, when there was a priest hunt through the country.

[1] O'Neill Daunt's "Personal Recollections of O'Connell," vol. i., p. 191

[2] "Memoir of Richard Lovell Edgworth," vol. ii., p. 46.

Happily there were safer places than private houses where the Holy Sacrifice might be offered during the worst days of persecution. In sandpits, in caves by the sea-shore, on rocks overhanging a river, in a valley difficult of access, the Catholics set up their altar. The much abused bogs were as serviceable to the poor Irish in the eighteenth century as they had been in the seventeenth. The priest-catchers could not, any more than Cromwell's Ironsides, follow them into the shelterless, dangerous, and seemingly trackless expanse. As the primitive Christians went down into the catacombs to worship God, so the Irish Catholics went out into these desert places to celebrate the holiest act of religion. On Sunday morning before daybreak, the priest, habited in the peasant's frieze, and having a wallet slung across his shoulder, repaired to a well-known spot, and dressed an altar on the leeward side of a turf-clamp, or, in wild weather, within the shelter of a peat-roofed hut. Wintry days thinned the congregation to a score or two of hardy peasants, who thought little of the slanting showers, and only laughed at the careering winds ; but in fair weather there was a larger mustering of the flock. The gentlefolk came from far and near, and, leaving their horses on the confines of *terra firma*, carefully threaded their way, closely following a scout of quick intelligence and light weight, who acted the part of guide ; while, disencumbered of their brogues, the pious crowd of humbler degree ran fearlessly forward, making short-cuts, and clearing the drains at a bound. There was something, no doubt, congenial to the hardy piety of these confessors of the faith in the free healthy air of the bogs, perfumed with a thymy fragrance. The wilderness itself had a charm for the fugitive flock hurrying to the Sunday Mass, when the gleams and shadows of early morn flitted over the bare brown stretches, the purple-clothed tracts, the dark motionless pools, and when the great silence was broken by the Latin of the sacred rite ascending to heaven, the Gaelic exhortation dropping into the hearts of the people, the whirr of the wild bird's wing, the lark's ecstatic song. Mountain districts had their altars in conspicuous but secure situations. A rocky ledge or a platform of loose stones was all that the priest required ; the congregation knelt around ; while keen-eyed, shrill-voiced, nimble-footed youths stood sentinel at the outposts, to signal the approach of suspicious strangers. Dwellers on the neighbouring heights and in the adjacent valley knew when and where the holy Sacrifice was offered up between earth and heaven, though no bell tolled the message, and no vision could descry the distant altar. If they could not reach the "mountain of the Mass," they turned their eyes thither at the hour of oblation, and sent a prayer upon the passing breeze.

When the penal rage had somewhat abated, the people were no longer obliged to perform their devotions in secret or well-nigh inaccessible places ; they could meet for that purpose in the open

fields. "The poorer sort of Irish natives," remarks an intelligent stranger, who travelled in Ireland, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, "are Roman Catholics, who make no scruple to assemble in the open fields. As we passed yesterday in a by-road, we saw a priest under a tree with a large assembly about him, celebrating Mass in his proper habit, and though a great distance from him, we heard him distinctly." "These sort of people," the writer adds, "are very solemn and sincere in their devotion." [1]

Tradition marks the site of these refuges in penal days; and the memory of the rites that sanctified them is imperishably preserved in the Gaelic names of the places thus consecrated, and still pointed out as the Friar's Bog, the Hollow of the Mass, Chapel-field, the Priest's Hill, and so on.[2] If the people were hunted and dared not worship in the sight of their rulers, so also was their Lord denied a tabernacle, and left to sojourn precariously in the tents of Israel. The whole island, north and south, east and west, was hallowed by this passage of the Lord.

Notwithstanding the very complete clearing-out of the towns during the Puritan regime, Catholics formed a considerable part of the population of most of them before many years had elapsed. They crept back under one pretence or another, and by their industry advanced their families from indigence and a servile position to a condition of ordinary comfort and monetary independence, which made them some amends for their deprivation of all political, municipal, and social rights, and for the insults and contumely they had daily to bear on account of their religion. But they enjoyed no security: they lived on the edge of a volcanic crater, and knew not at what moment an explosion might ensue. A glance through Hardiman's "History of Galway" will show to what vicissitudes the inhabitants of an important town were exposed by the bigotry or the apprehensions of the executive. Galway, like most of the Irish ports remained a strong English colony for many centuries after the Anglo-Norman invasion, the garrison keeping up a defensive war against their troublesome Irish neighbours, and the civic authorities taking special care to permit "neither O ne Mac to strutte ne swagger throughe the streets of Gallway." As a trading station this capital of the west held a high position, and there was a saying that in a foreign port it would be asked—"What part of Galway Ireland was situated in?" Lord Henry Cromwell, in describing the commercial advantages of that Western seaport, says, "that it lies open for trade with Spain, the Straits, the West Indies, and other places, and is second to no town in the three nations, London excepted." But its former loyalty to the English

[1] "A Tour in Ireland." By two English Gentlemen (1746), p. 163.

[2] See Dr. Joyce's "Irish Names of Places," First Series; and Dean Cogan's "Diocese of Meath."

interest did not save it, as we have seen, from being cleared of its ancient inhabitants under the Cromwellian regime. They declined conversion to the new English religion, faced the consequences, and were confounded in the same calamity with the old Irish population. One way or another, however, Catholicity sprang up again in Galway, and was so much in the ascendant, with regard to numbers at least, in 1714, that one James French, a regular Popish clergyman, who had lain in gaol a long time committed for high treason, for returning from beyond seas after being transported, could not be tried for want of a Protestant jury of freeholders. Not long after this extraordinary dilemma had occurred, many of the Corporation commiserating the distressed condition of the Catholic inhabitants, admitted several persons not residing in the town, to the freedom and privileges of the Corporation. Thereupon very great contentions arose, and the advocates of the Protestant interest sent a petition to the Parliament of Ireland, calling for the interference of the government, and setting forth, in detail, the deplorable condition of affairs. This document declared that nunneries and other places of refuge for religious and secular priests, friars, and other offenders against the law, had been connived at, while a great number of Papists had, by the neglect of the magistrates, been permitted to inhabit the town. Popish priests, friars, and dignitaries of the Church of Rome (as the memorial stated), frequently landed from foreign parts, and, through the connivance of the justices of the peace, were sheltered from justice, and from thence dispersed themselves all over the kingdom. Parliament duly commended the zeal of these religious and loyal corporators; their Lordships of the Upper House could not omit observing on the occasion that the insolence of the Papists throughout the nation was very great; and measures were taken to save the country from destruction. Some years later, namely, in 1731, there was another penal visitation of Galway, and the Mayor was ordered to apprehend all Popish archbishops, bishops, jesuits, and friars within the town and country, and to suppress all monasteries and nunneries. But these Irish Papists were so obstinate and irrepressible, there seemed to be hardly any use in turning them out. On each occasion the banished townspeople, the nuns as well as the rest, took refuge with their country cousins; and, quietly awaiting the course of events, returned to their wonted habitations on the first opportunity. Stratford Eyre being appointed governor of the town and port, and vice-admiral of the province in 1747, found himself under the obligation of forwarding an unsatisfactory report to his government. There were no other, he said, than Popish merchants in the town though they were forbidden by express laws from inhabiting therein, and had been formerly, every man, turned out. And, what was worse, several French officers, or French officers of Irish birth and extraction, were then in

the town with their relations, recruiting for the Irish Brigades as was suspected. The governor being determined to put a restraint on all ill-designing men, ordered everyone coming into the town to be searched, and had the gates closed at four o'clock in the afternoon; and when, a couple of years later on, he undertook to issue certain orders to the inhabitants, he threatened that if he were not instantaneously obeyed, he would put the Popery laws into immediate execution.

Meanwhile, the impoverished country gentry were harrassed by constantly recurring vexations, and the ever-present dread of all too real dangers. Many gentlemen, who had returned to their homes after the surrender of Limerick, endeavoured to get away to the Continent when they saw that the solemnly ratified Articles of the Treaty were shamelessly violated. But flight by that time had become exceedingly difficult. They were not allowed to go abroad; they had to stay to bear all the weary yoke of the penal code, and possibly to suffer at the hands of demoralised relatives, or unprincipled neighbours, the loss of the few acres that had remained in their possession. Not even those who had got land in Connaught from the Parliamentary Commissioners were safe under the new legislation. The Staffords, for instance, who had been transplanted from Wexford, were afterwards dispossessed of the lands apportioned to them in the county of Roscommon, by a relative who, having conformed to the State religion, received, as his recompense, the property of his elder brother.[1] If a gentleman were not actually robbed in his own person of his property, he had no security at all that it would not eventually, by a process known to the penal law-givers, be made to strengthen the Protestant interest; for, should he die before his heir was of age, the Government would take the youth under its paternal care, and bring him up in the way it wished him to go. This happened in the ancient Irish family of the Kavanaghs of Borris. The two English travellers already quoted, visited in the course of their tour the noble seat of that family, and heard the people lamenting the recent death of the proprietor. "The heir is a minor," observes the writer of the tour, "the house and town with a great estate belong to this young gentleman. There is a law in this kingdom that the minor of a Roman Catholic, left so by the death of his father, is accounted the heir of the Crown; and the Lord Chancellor, for the time being, is appointed his guardian, in order to bring him up a Protestant, and this young gentleman is now in Westminster School for that purpose." Later in the century, the Catholic faith was preserved in a noble family by the energy and self-devotion of Father Dixon, a member of the Society of Jesus, and parish priest of St. Michan's in Dublin, who carried off Lord Gormanstown in his

[1] See Dr. Hardiman's "Irish Minstrelsy," p. 110, note.

nonage to France, superintended his education, and remained with him until the young man, having attained his majority, could return to Ireland and take possession of his estate, without renouncing his inheritance in heaven. It is related in Battersby's "Jesuits in Dublin," that while they were in Paris the good priest was obliged to have a well-armed person with himself to take care of his charge, who, on more than one occasion, was about to be hoodwinked in the evening and carried away by force. Father Dixon, who was an educated and polished gentleman, happened to be a good swordsman also, and on these occasions "had to do a little with an elegant cane-sword, which had been given him by one of the princes of the blood in France."

Many of the gentry, especially in Connaught, were reduced by the Williamite wars to the last stage of destitution. Relatives and friends, though hardly better off than they, supported them until the Government, recognising their distress, issued an order that "all vagrants pretending to be Irish gentlemen" should be transported. Several unfortunate persons were accordingly shipped to North America in the reign of Queen Anne. Some few of the victims of confiscation, who remained in Ireland, got back in one way or another, generally through the exertions of powerful friends, a moiety of their rightful possessions; but they were oftentimes little the better of their nominal proprietorship. It was so with the antiquary Roderick O'Flaherty, who, though he obtained a Government title to some acres of his once extensive patrimony, found himself, nevertheless, in a condition of absolute poverty, owing to the depopulation of the country, and the widespread misery that prevailed. His "Ogygia" and other works of learned research and high historic value, were written in a dilapidated house on the sea-shore facing the islands of Arran; and on a low rock, covered with a green mossy sward, the old man spent much of his time viewing the sublime prospect of the ocean, the historic islands, and the distant coast of Clare. "I live," he says "a banished man within the bounds of my native soil; a spectator of others enriched by my birthright; an object of condoling to my relations and friends, and a condoler of their miseries." Here in his ruined habitation he was visited by Edward Lhuyd, the author of the "Archæologia Britanica," who subsequently, in referring to a book and letter forwarded to O'Flaherty, observed that the old Irish scholar would be "scarce able to pay postage." Thither, also, journeyed William Molyneux in 1709, hoping to see some old Irish manuscripts belonging to the antiquary; but in this the traveller was disappointed. O'Flaherty, then over eighty years of age, had not been able to retain such treasures; "ill fortune had stripped him of these as well as his other goods."[1]

[1] These and other notices of the author of "Ogygia" will be found in Dr. Hardiman's edition of "West Connaught," and in the first volume of "The Miscellany of the Irish Archæological Society."

Among the more fortunate of the Catholic families were the O'Conors of Belanagar, in the county of Roscommon; and yet their history in the eighteenth century shows what dangers encompassed the followers of the ancient faith, and how much they had to suffer for their principles. Denis O'Conor, the head of the family in the beginning of the century, had been dispossessed of his ancient inheritance, and cultivated with his own hands a farm at Knockmore, near Ballyfarnon. He married Mary O'Rorke of Breffiny, a daughter of the Captain Tiernan O'Rorke who went to France after the surrender of Limerick, and was killed, in 1702, at the battle of Luzzara; in which engagement also fell, fighting in the opposite ranks, O'Conor's nephew, Francis MacDonnel, Major in the Imperial service.[1] In the humble home at Knockmore, the descendants of a princely stock, and the faithful adherents of the ancient creed, brought up their children, teaching them lessons of industry, Christian humility, and veneration for all that was truly great. O'Conor would often say to his sons: "Boys, you must not be impudent to the poor: remember, though I am the son of a gentleman, ye are the children of a ploughman;" and his distinguished son, the venerable Charles O'Conor, long remembered how, when he was a child, his father would take him in his arms and say to him, with uncommon emotion, in Irish: "My child, be always prepared for poverty, and then you will never become guilty to avoid it." O'Conor's great desire was to get back Belanagar, and be in a position to befriend his relatives and others who had lost their homes and property. Through the exertions of Counsellor Terence M'Donagh of Creevagh—a great friend to the Catholic gentry in those days—the family residence and a part of the ancient property were recovered. Belanagar became thereupon the rendezvous of the unfortunate Jacobites, who were always welcome, especially when they could recount the scenes of distress they were condemned to travel through at home and abroad. The master of the hospitable mansion commiserated all exiles from the island of the Gael, and invited his mother-in-law, who was lady-of-honour at the court of St. Germains, to come to Belanagar and live and die in her native country. The lady accepted the invitation and spent the remainder of her life at Belanagar, whither a small pension was annually remitted to her from France in consideration of the faithful and romantic attachment of her family to the house of Stuart.

The first person who put a Latin grammar into the hands of young Charles O'Conor was a poor friar, of the Convent of Creevelea, who scarcely could speak a word of English, but knew how to teach his pupil to read and write Irish grammatically, and to pronounce it with the

[1] Mr. O'Callaghan in his animated description of the surprise and rescue of Cremona, has much to say of Major MacDonnel, who on that occasion took Marshal Villeroy a prisoner.—See "History of the Irish Brigades."

accuracy and accent of the ancients. The lad also received some instruction from another clergyman. But had he not been well disposed to profit by the scant opportunities thus afforded for education, he would have grown up in absolute ignorance of letters; for the proclamations issued were so severe, the priests seldom remained more than one night in any place; and the gentry were afraid to let their children go much abroad, lest they should learn from wicked companions the power which the laws gave them over their own parents, or become acquainted with the provisions of the Gavel Act. Providence, however, sent young Charles a kind friend and a good preceptor in the person of his uncle, Dr. O'Rorke, Bishop of Killala, the son of the Captain O'Rorke already mentioned. This prelate had been chaplain and private secretary to Prince Eugene of Savoy, to whom he was introduced as the son of the Irish officer whose fate on the field of Luzzara the great commander had himself witnessed. Soon after he received this appointment Dr. O'Rorke was named Bishop of Killala. The prince, on taking leave of his chaplain, presented him with a gold cross and a ring set in diamonds, and introduced him to the Emperor Leopold, who warmly recommended him to Queen Anne by private letters, and to all his allies by a passport written on parchment, signed by Leopold himself, and sealed with the great seal of the empire. Those marks of imperial favour procured him an audience and letters from the queen to some of the leading men in Ireland. But not even her Majesty's protection could avail him in Ireland. On his arrival in his diocese he was dogged as a Popish spy; obliged to change his name to that of Fitzgerald; to skulk some years in the bogs of Joyce country; and finally, to seek an asylum among his relatives in the house of Belanagar, from which he dated his letters to his clergy—*Ex loco nostri Refugii.* To this revered guest young O'Conor was indebted for sound, intellectual, and mental culture. The bishop obliged him to copy the most beautiful pages from the best English writers; to translate the classics into chaste English; and to commit to memory passages from the great poets and the most admired writers of prose. Nor would he allow the young man to neglect the study of the Irish language. One day, when the pupil had succeeded very happily in describing to a friend in Vienna the miseries of the old Irish, a task pointed out to him by the bishop, he told his instructor that he would never more write in Irish, since he succeeded so well in English. "No," said Dr. O'Rorke, "what you have once learned you must never forget, and you shall not go to rest until you have translated the psalm *Miserere* into Irish. The youth obeyed, and produced a translation which so much pleased the bishop, that he read it for the guests assembled that night at Belanagar. Among the company was the bard O'Carolan, who, on hearing the Gaelic version read in a solemn, affecting voice, burst into a flood of

tears, and taking his harp in a fit of rapturous affection for the family of Belanagar, swept along the strings his *Donagha Cahill oig*, singing extempore the fall of the Irish race, the hospitality of old Denis O'Conor, and his greatness of soul, who in the midst of crosses and calamities harboured that very night in his house a crowd of reduced gentlemen, and hired a number of harpers to strike up a solemn concert at Midnight Mass (for it was Christmas Eve), and a dancing master, a fencing master, and an Irish master, for the instruction and polite education of his children.

Young O'Conor was taught music by O'Carolan, and learned to play on the harp. The bard was an honoured guest at Belanagar, as well as in the houses of the gentry throughout the country, whether Protestant or Catholic. He did not play for hire. He composed his pieces only when some mighty passion elevated his soul. "I think," he said one day, "that when I am among the O'Conors, the harp has the old sound in it." "No," said the harper M'Cabe, who was present, "but your soul has the old madness in it."

Such were the studies of the young man, whose amusement it was to run with the dogs in the morning, and listen to the tales of ancient times at night. When about seventeen years of age he was sent to Dublin and placed with a priest, the Rev. Walter Skelton, under whose instruction he made great proficiency in mathematics and natural philosophy. In due course he returned to the country, and, devoting himself to agricultural and literary pursuits, resided on a farm given to him by his father. He married Miss O'Hogan of Tullyoge, in the county of Tyrone, the lady bringing him a considerable fortune. On the death of his father, in 1749, he removed to Belanagar, and kept up there the same hospitable house, to whose door the unfortunate were always welcome. Not alone was he a friend to the broken gentry: he was a benefactor to the people; providing for their children by getting them into foreign armies, or enabling them to enter the priesthood; and receiving the small remittances sent to them from France, Spain, and Germany. The people loved him: for he joined in their sports, played their old music, was the writer of their pedigrees, and recounted to them the adventures of their fathers after the battle of Aughrim, adding a native grace to his Irish narratives, and knowing well how to captivate a people with whose genius and manners he was intimately acquainted. Convinced that in all systems the greatest number must be poor, he loved to inculcate in a thousand shapes such old maxims as helped to alleviate the calamities he was not able to remove.[1]

[1] This sketch of the O'Conors is taken almost word for word from the "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Charles O'Conor of Belanagar," by the Rev. Charles O'Conor, D.D.

The first volume, printed in 1796, was never published. A few copies were given to friends, and the remainder were destroyed by the author under the apprehension that its publication

Such were the circumstances and such the people surrounding the youth and early manhood of the learned historian, the friend of Johnson and Burke, the *venerable* Charles O'Conor of Belanagar. But not even he was to be exempt in his own person from the outrages which the penal system made it easy to perpetrate. In his old age, when, as we are told, his patriarchal appearance attracted the notice and commanded the respect and veneration of all who beheld him; and when, notwithstanding the industry and economy he had practised in order that he might have wherewithal to be generous, his resources were embarrassed by the mercantile disappointments of one of his sons; an unworthy younger brother read his recantation before the Archbishop of Dublin, and by filing a bill of discovery sought to possess himself of the property of Belanagar.[1]

Temptations to apostasy often, unfortunately, proved too strong in those days for the virtue of men whose affections were centred in their worldly possessions, and who were ambitious to advance their children in life. Apostasy secured to a gentleman the possession of his own patrimony, enabled him to appropriate the goods of a relative or neighbour, and opened to his sons a career in the military, the legal, and the clerical professions. At one time it was not unusual for young men with an aptitude for the law to repair to the capital, attend service in the Protestant Church, and in the usual course be called to the bar. This done they returned to their country home, married into one of the Catholic families, brought up their children in the old religion, and perhaps retained one of the hunted priests as a chaplain. However, the guardians of the English interest were not slow to perceive the inefficacy of such conversions, and the dangers to Church and State likely to arise from the practice of introducing sheep in wolves' clothing into the legal profession. Severe penalties

might injure the family. The second volume, which Dr. O'Conor considered far more interesting, was not even printed. The MS. was burned, at his request, by the friend to whose care it had been entrusted.—"Notes and Queries," 3rd Series, vol. xi., p. 59.

The surviving volume, full as it is of valuable and interesting matter, is out of the reach of general readers. It is not to be found in every gentleman's library; nor in every public library. The copy in Trinity College, Dublin, cost, we believe, £21; that in the King's Inns' Library was disposed of at the sale of the Duke of Sussex Library in 1844. As a rule, books which treated of Irish affairs in a too national or too sympathetic a spirit, or entered into details of ancient genealogies, topography, &c., have hitherto been considered dangerous. In 1720, the Lord Justices prohibited the circulation of a reprint of Lord Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in Ireland," considering the work of a seditious nature. In 1775, the Catholic bishops of the South publicly condemned the "Hibernia Dominicana," as a work likely to disturb the public peace and tranquillity. "Moore's Irish Melodies" were considered dangerous in the early part of the nineteenth century; and about thirty-eight years ago, the sudden dissolution of the topographical department of the Ordnance Survey was commonly understood to signify that the authorities thought it undesirable to have attention drawn to old names, old boundaries, and old traditions.

1 See Wyse's "History of the Catholic Association;" also "History and General Memoir of the O'Connors, Kings of Connaught, and their Descendants."

were therefore decreed against converts who neglected to bring up their children in the established religion; and penal legislation in this branch was crowned by an Act of George II., which provided that any barrister or attorney who married a Catholic should be disbarred. Some gentlemen of Catholic birth were found ready to comply even with these hard conditions. Relinquishing whatever prepossession they might entertain in favour of a Catholic alliance, they married to please the State, imitated the Cromwellian gentry even in their Sunday church-going and their after-dinner toasts; and nothing more was heard of their ancient creed until death, at length approaching, reminded them that they should soon appear at the bar of a tribunal where not all the influence of the State and Church of England together could in aught avail them. What a sensation was created in a "respectable" family of this description when the children heard their dying father imploring the aid of a priest! and what a chance there was of the prayer, which those nearest and dearest to him took for the wild ravings of a fevered brain, being complied with, unless some hanger-on in the kitchen or the stable learned the poor master's distress and ran across the country to search in farm-houses or amidst the ruins of the ivied abbey for the anointed minister who might shrive the gasping sinner! If the master still retained his senses he possibly would have to encounter once more the tempter in all his strength. The last assault would likely enough be in a reminder that his coming under the description of a "lapsed Papist" would materially affect the disposition of his property and the future of his family. One of the last cases, we believe, which was brought into court under the penal laws was an action taken by a gentleman who sought to deprive his sisters of a property left to them by their father, on the plea that the testator being a lapsed Papist had no power to dispose of his property; and it may be remembered that, in 1802, when the validity of Lord Dunboyne's will was disputed, a learned serjeant stated, that by the laws then in force, a person relapsing to Popery from the Protestant religion, was deprived of the benefit of the laws made in favour of Roman Catholics, and was, of course, as under the old Popery laws, incapable of making a will of landed property.

By a further strengthening of the Popery laws, it was enacted that converts should no longer be permitted to confine their profession of the reformed doctrines of Christianity to attendance at the Protestant Church services. They must in future take the oath of abjuration with solemn ceremonial, and receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the established rite. This was the hardest condition of all for saving one's property or improving one's position. Still though it was sometimes complied with, the expected result was not invariably attained; for there were found discoverers clever enough to detect flaws even in a certificate of conformity, and men unprincipled

enough thus to enrich themselves at the expense of those "kiln-dried Protestants."

In some instances the remnant of an estate was left in the possession of its rightful owner: thanks to its remote or inaccessible situation. Where roads were bad or non-existent, and military stations few and far between, it was not worth anyone's while to undertake a difficult expedition in search of what would probably not repay the trouble of discovery. Glencara, a small estate belonging to the O'Connells, was so happily hidden in the Kerry mountains that it escaped confiscation: a circumstance which so struck the Liberator's fancy, that he said if ever he took a title it would be Earl of Glencara.[1] Obscurity proved in other ways, too, a great blessing to this family, as Dr. Smith learned when he visited their territory, on his journey through the mountain fastnesses in search of materials for his histories of Cork and Kerry. The Daniel O'Connell of that day hospitably entertained the learned traveller, and gave him a great deal of useful and interesting information. In return for the kindness he received, Dr. Smith intimated his intention of giving the O'Connells of Derrynane Abbey a prominent place in the forthcoming work. But O'Connell thought of his twenty-two children and the Penal Code, and he replied: "We have peace and comfort here, Dr. Smith; we love the faith of our fathers; and amidst the seclusion of these glens enjoy a respite from persecution. If man is against us, God is for us. He gives us wherewithal to pay for the education of our children in foreign lands, and enough to assist their advancement in the Irish Brigade; but if you make mention of me or mine, the solitude of the sea-shore will no longer be our security —the *sassenagh* will scale the mountains of Derrynane, and we shall be driven upon the world without house or home."[2]

That many Catholics were able to live like gentlemen, or at any rate in decent comfort, in the more populous parts of the country, was owing to the kindness of their Protestant neighbours, who took leases and held properties in trust for them. This was an illegal proceeding, no doubt, for the Penal Code prohibited Protestants from acting as trustees to Catholics; but the fidelity with which these engagements were discharged was creditable in the highest degree. "There are instances upon record," says Mr. O'Driscoll, in his "Views of Ireland," "of the highest honour and most exalted generosity in the management of these important trusts. There were friendships that could not be broken, and hearts which could not be corrupted by the barbarity of the laws." Nor was it to the wealthy alone that the unfortunate Catholics were indebted for a helpful hand. A great portion

[1] O'Neill Daunt's "Personal Recollections of the late Daniel O'Connell."

[2] See a paper—one of a series entitled "Ancestral Houses"—which appeared in the *Weekly Register*, 1864.

of the estates of one of the largest counties in Ireland was conveyed to a Protestant barber; and thus a poor man, whose whole possessions did not exceed a few pounds in value, had legally in his possession lands worth many thousands. But even in matters of secondary importance, the Catholics were dependent on the kindness of their Protestant neighbours and the fidelity of their Protestant servants. They were not allowed to have arms of any kind; and this, at a time when every gentleman wore a sword, and when, owing to the disturbed state of the country, it was necessary that houses remote from towns should be provided with means of defence. Moore,[1] in his striking way, notes the dilemma of the Irish gentleman of that day, who, if he were found with weapons, might be transported, and if without them, might be murdered.[2]

But while a few of the Catholic families were fortunate enough to retain to some extent their due position, the great majority sank, externally at least, into the condition contemplated by the framers of the Penal Code. That they were not more speedily trampled into the very lowest grade was due, in the first place, to their pride of lineage, which supported them in their assumption of a position which their fortune was quite inadequate to support; and, in the second place, to the sympathy of the native population, whose love for the old stock was faithful through good and through evil report, and who never denied the fallen gentleman the respect which his ancestors enjoyed. The peasantry seemed almost to forget their own sorrows in their pity for those who had fallen from a higher estate; they gave the decayed gentleman the title his ancestors had borne; and tilled for him the little plot of ground which, with a poor cabin, he was, perhaps, allowed rent free, or on a trifling acknowledgment to the owner. Our two English travellers were astonished, on a market-day at Callan, to see one of these poor gentry mounted on a little horse riding into the town, and receiving tokens of extraordinary respect from the native Irish who were assembled in the street. Neither his figure nor his dress seemed to entitle him to such distinction, and the strangers had the curiosity to ask what was meant by showing the man so much civility. The explanation was readily given; and "I own," says the writer, "that this account gave me a secret pleasure: it called to my memory an idea of many ages past; and when I observed this man I

[1] "Memoirs of Captain Rock."

[2] "In 1733, Lord Gormanstown and Richard Barnwell were apprehended and arraigned at the Meath assizes for wearing swords when they went to pay their respects to the judges and gentlemen of the county at the assizes."—Mr. Lecky's "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," vol. ii., p. 285, *note*.

In 1737, Mr. Nugent and Captain Maguire were indicted for wearing swords contrary to law.—"Primate Boutler's Letters," vol. ii., p. 178.

"Lord Kenmare's armorial bearings were effaced from his carriage in the very court-yard of Dublin Castle."—*London Quarterly Review*, July, 1878.

looked upon him as one of the ancient Milesian race, so much renowned for their wisdom and victories, even before Christianity had a being in the world."[1] As long as these representatives of the ancient clans remained in being, the Cromwellian settlers had no chance of being regarded by the natives of the country as anything but upstarts and make-believe gentry. Even when the rightful heirs were away in foreign countries, and thought no more of their disallowed claims, the people remembered them and expected their return. "The veneration of the people for the Milesian families, or even for those who can trace connection with them," writes Dr. Hardiman, in his notes to the "Irish Minstrelsy," "can hardly be conceived; to this day they weep over the political downfall of the ancient gentry of the land;" and on one occasion a poor man observed to the antiquary, in reference to the condition of a certain property, "The heir is in France, but he has been expected as long as I can remember; but, alas! I am now old, and I fear he will never return."

Meanwhile, the descendants of the soldier settlers had been forming a new aristocracy, which did little credit to their English ancestry. They turned out a reckless, extravagant, domineering class, with the tyrannical habits of conquerors by the sword, and the insolent manners of slave-drivers. The descendants of the Cromwellian landowners became, says Mr. Goldwin Smith, probably the very worst upper class with which a country was every afflicted; their drunkenness, their blasphemy, their ferocious duelling, left the squires of England far behind; they had prisons in their houses for the punishment of the lower orders; and not a century has passed, he adds, since these ruffians and tyrants filled, in Ireland, the seat of justice.[2] The condition of the country during the Penal times could hardly be conceived, if we had not on record the testimony of educated and thoughtful men who visited Ireland at that period and left in works of high authority singularly vivid descriptions of the scenes they witnessed. Arthur Young was filled with indignation when he considered the relations existing between the Protestant proprietors and their Catholic slaves. "A landlord in Ireland," he says, "can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer, or cottar, dares to refuse to execute. Nothing satisfies him but unlimited submission; disrespect, or anything tending towards sauciness, he may punish with his cane or his horsewhip, with the most perfect security; a poor man would have

[1] Old title deeds were treasured with jealous care by these inheritors of ancient names, and maps of ancestral possessions were laid by in the hope that others beside "the king" should "have their own again." The Rev. Horatio Townshend remarks "that the Danes at no very distant period, are reported to have had similar maps, and, on every marriage contract, to have settled an Irish portion on their children."—"Statistical Survey of the county of Cork" (1810), p. 96.

[2] "Irish History and Irish Character."

his bones broken if he offered to lift his hand in his own defence; knocking down is spoken of in the country in a manner that makes an Englishman stare. It must strike the most careless traveller, to see whole strings of cars whipped into a ditch by a gentleman's footman, to make way for his carriage; if they are overturned or broken in pieces, no matter, it is taken in patience; were they to complain, they would, perhaps, be horsewhipped. The execution of the laws lies very much in the hands of the justices of the peace, many of whom are drawn from the most illiberal class in the kingdom. If a poor man lodges his complaint against a gentleman, and the justice issues a summons for his appearance, it is a fixed affront, and he will infallibly be *called out.* Where *manners* are in conspiracy against *law,* to whom are the oppressed people to have recourse?" [1]

The isolated position in which most of these country gentry lived was a great hindrance to their reformation. Whatever chance there might be in towns or populous neighbourhoods of occasional approach to friendly relations between the domineering Protestants and the victimised Catholics, there was none whatever in the country parts, where no opportunity was afforded of kindly intercourse, and no public opinion existed that might hold the oppressor in check. Market towns were few, roads were almost impracticable, post-offices were perhaps thirty or forty miles away from a gentleman's seat. Whatever was required by the family and its retainers should be produced on the land, or stored in large quantities on the premises. The establishment was supported on a vast scale; a multitude of servants were kept; troops of horses ran half wild through the fields; rude profusion prevailed in every department. The Cromwellian settlers and their immediate descendants lived in the mansions from which the Catholic nobility and gentry had been expelled; but after some time these tenements fell into ruin, and, whether from want of money, or through reckless indifference, the proprietors took little pains to house themselves decently. Arthur Young says that, thirty years before he visited Ireland, there were hardly ten houses in the country fit for an English pig, but that lately a great number of houses had been begun on a grand scale, and that gardens of proportionate extent were being enclosed. We may suppose that after some five or ten or twenty Irish acres had been walled in to form a garden, there would not be much money left for stocking the horticultural domain. At any rate, the mansions so grandly designed were oftentimes ruined before they were roofed. The owners got into difficulties; they were "obliged to sell an estate to pay for a house; or at best, they lived in debt, danger, and subterfuge the rest of their days, nominally possessors of a palace, but really in dread of a jail. Others 'mistook reverse of

[1] "Agricultural Tour in Ireland," 1776–1779.

wrong for right;' marking these misfortunes, they determined never to build; so they lived on in wretched houses out of repair, with locks of doors out of order, the pulleys of windows without sash-line; in short, without what we are accustomed to consider as the common comforts and decencies of life. Others shunned these extremes; but without keeping the safe middle course, they struck out a new half-way mode of going wrong; these would neither build a palace nor live in a hovel; but they planned the palace, built offices to suit, then turned stable and coach-house into their dwelling-house, or provisional residence for the remainder of their days, leaving the rest to fate and to their sons." [1]

One of the most disastrous consequences of the Penal system was the barrier it set up between the new settlers and the ancient inhabitants, whether old English or native Irish. Antagonism of race was intensified by religious animosity; power, honour, wealth, were the prerogative of the Protestant few who formed the garrison in the enemy's country, looked upon Irish Papists as creatures of another species, and shunned social contact with them as if association with the degraded race entailed contamination. "Sure I am," says Edmund Burke, "that there have been thousands in Ireland who have never conversed with a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to their gardener's workmen, or to ask their way, when they had lost it, in their sports; or at best, who had known them only as footmen or other domestics of the second or third order: and so averse were they, some time ago, to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stable." [2] Had it not been for this atrocious code, the Cromwellian troopers and the Williamite settlers would have amalgamated with the old inhabitants; or, at any rate, their immediate descendants would have been hardly distinguishable from the purely native growth around them. Even as it was the tendency to fraternise appeared so decided, that strong measures had to be taken at the outset to prevent the soldier settlers allying themselves with their Irish neighbours; dragoons marrying Irishwomen were reduced to foot soldiers, and foot soldiers to pioneers; and if after they had been disbanded they offended in this way, they were liable to have their "idolatrous" wives taken from them, or to march after them to Connaught. Ireton forbade his officers to marry Irishwomen under pain of being cashiered: and yet, in spite of all this, Mr. Prendergast tells us, many of the children of Cromwell's soldiers could not speak one word of English, and five years after their planting the settlers had Irish harpers in their houses. It was the

[1] "Memoir of Richard Lovell Edgworth," vol. ii., pp. 6, 7.
[2] Letter to Sir H. Langrishe, M.P.

same with the families of King William's soldiers who sat down in Ireland. Nothing, in short, but the "vicious perfection" of the Penal Code could have retarded the fusion of the two races dwelling in the same land, and compelled them to maintain no other relations than those produced by hatred and contempt, misunderstanding and exasperation.

So complete was the debasement of the Irish Catholics in the time of Dean Swift, that he did not hesitate to class Papists with women and children in the scale of political importance; and the law, while relentlessly pursuing them into every department of social life, and every sanctuary of domestic peace, declined to acknowledge their existence. In 1754, the Lord Chancellor declared in public court that the law did not presume a Papist to exist in the kingdom, nor could he breathe without the connivance of the Government. But attempts to exterminate a nation are as senseless as were the efforts of Sydney Smith's old woman to sweep out the ocean tide with a broom. No matter what was done, the Irish would not cease to be; they were trampled into the dust—they and their religion—but they sprang up again, religion and all, like the grass and the shamrocks. Lord Deputy Chichester, as early as in 1607, was at his wit's end about this Irish question, and avowed his belief that "the very soil was infected with Popery." One hundred and fifty years later, after Cromwell and William and the Penal Laws had done their worst in Ireland, Dr. Campbell declared that "no Englishman can conceive the virulence of Irish Popery."[1] To such an extent did the Irish people multiply in the days of their affliction, that the guardians of the Protestant interest became seriously alarmed. At that rate of progression it was plain the Catholic population would be quadrupled in the course of a century. It was absolutely necessary to convert them, since they could not be destroyed; and by the introduction of the Charter School system, the proselytising fire was opened on the Catholics. But it was all labour in vain; the Irish were as obstinate in this as in everything else: they could neither be cajoled nor dragooned into Protestantism. Nay more, with sublime irony they contrived to entice away many of the true English religion. "We are daily losing," says Primate Boulter, "several of our meaner people, who go off to Popery." More steam was therefore got up, and new engines of conversion were put in motion: with, however, the usual result. The proselytes were so few that it was calculated it would take 4,000 years to convert the Irish.

The great mass of the people showed all through a truly heroic spirit. They were inaccessible to bribery; they were deaf to persuasion; nothing could induce them to give up the religion of their

[1] "Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland."

fathers, to forsake the Soggarth Aroon, to forfeit their heavenly inheritance. Their sufferings, in some respects, might be paralleled in degenerate empires where slavery existed without control; but in other respects, their condition could hardly be matched in any state of society, Pagan or Christian. While they were as truly bondsmen as the purchased negro, they were denied the care which the slave-master bestows on his human live-stock. They were poorly fed, scantily clothed, and miserably housed. Dr. Day, the eccentric philanthropist, who, like many in his time, had taken up Rousseau's notions of the blessedness of man in a primitive state of society, found his prejudices in favour of savage life somewhat shaken on seeing the Irish peasant in his home.[1]

Naturally enough, perhaps, those who had reduced the peasant to so deplorable a condition affected to regard him as the last of human kind, exaggerated his failings, reproached him with the vices their own conduct had generated, and made a laughing-stock of his distress. M. de Latocnaye, a French emigré, who made a journey in Ireland about the year 1796, noticed the prevalence of this unmanly disposition. The people, whose misery he witnessed, were described to him as lazy, idle, indolent, and so on through the usual vocabulary; but he discovered that their wages were sixpence a day, and that they received neither aid nor encouragement to better their condition. "What," he asks, "would be the use of industry under such circumstances? Their misery is so great that all becomes indifferent to them. But, supply them with the means of raising themselves from this abject state, give them a taste for the comforts of life, and you will soon see what sort of men these are whom you now upbraid with laziness and indolence." In strong language he denounces the hard-heartedness which finds in the spectacle of another's wretchedness a fit subject of derision: "Maudit soit l'homme cruel qui le premier osa se faire un jeu de la misère de son semblable: c'est une ruse effroyable de l'avarice, car aussitôt que l'on a ri du mal d'autrui, on se croit dispensé de le secourir."[2]

[1] In concluding his "Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political," Mr. Wakefield speaks as follows:—"The reader will discover, throughout the preceding pages, such various gradations of misery as he could not have supposed possible to exist, even among the most barbarous nations. Man is exhibited to his view as oppressed and insulted; he will perceive the hand of tyranny pressing on him, heavily and unsparingly, and find an accumulation of human beings, without any other use than for the accumulation of wretchedness. He will find him hunted from the vale to the mountain top, to shelter in the rude caverns and rocks, from his brother Christian, the politically orthodox believer in the humble author of their common faith. Yet, amongst all these evils, he will still recognise the genius of the people like a bright star in a tempestuous and gloomy horizon," &c. &c. Miss Edgeworth says that Arthur Young was the first who gave a faithful picture of the people of Ireland; and it is acknowledged that Wakefield's book is the best on the subject after Young's. Both writers were Englishmen.

[2] "Promenade d'un Français dans l'Irlande (1797)."

Another dispassionate observer, writing at a later date, notes the cause of the servility and duplicity with which, in common with laziness and idleness, the lower class of the Irish were reproached. "They have long been in the habit," says the Rev. Horatio Townsend "of paying submissive deference to their superiors; every person calling himself a gentleman not only expected immediate obedience to his mandate, but often for the most trifling offence, and sometimes for no offence at all, inflicted manual punishment without the smallest apprehension of resistance on the part of the sufferer. One consequence of this treatment" he continues, "was the servility of mind, which abject dependence always inspires. He that cannot throw off his servitude must endeavour to soften it; he will flatter where he despises, and profess attachment where he feels abhorrence. Accustomed to disguise his sentiments, and speak the language of falsehood, adulation and insincerity will at length become a part of his character. Thus nature may be reproached for faults which were the offspring of situation and habit."[1]

The Irish are incurably turbulent—they are never content—complained the rack-renting landlords. But the author of the "Philosophical Survey" supplies the answer in a phrase: "we make them poor and unhappy," he says, "and then we wonder that they are so prone to tumult and disorder." The Tories (descendants of men of substance who had fled into desert places to escape being butchered or transplanted), the Rapparees and Whiteboys (associations of peasants driven mad by the injustice of the law and the tyranny of the landlords), disturbed now and then the peace of the law-protected gentry. The three kingdoms rang with the story of the crimes committed by these Irish outlaws. No proclamation reached the great world of the intolerable sufferings inflicted on the native population, save now and again in the unerring shot that laid the oppressor low, and in the lurid light his burning mansion flung across the moor.[2]

Thus, from the date of the infraction of the Treaty of Limerick

[1] "Statistical Survey of the county of Cork." pp. 96, 97.

[2] "With such characteristical dispositions as the Irish are proved to possess,' writes Bishop Milner, "it is not in the nature of things that they should be, upon the whole an immoral people; and yet I am prepared to meet with a great number of villains, and those of the most hardened class among them. First, experience shows that there are a great many wretches of this description in every nation under the sun, no advantage of disposition or education being at all times able to stem the tide of human passions. Secondly, the example which the Irish have seen amongst our countrymen for ages past, the treatment which they have experienced at their hands, and the laws to which they have been subjected by them, have all been calculated to eradicate every moral and humane feeling from their breasts, and cannot but have produced a bad effect upon a certain number of them."—"Inquiry into certain vulgar opinions concerning the Catholic Inhabitants and the Antiquities of Ireland" (1808), p. 65.

down to a late period in the following century, the penal code held its sway unchecked: corrupting the integrity and stultifying the conscience of the privileged classes, and doing all that a barbarous legislation could do, to brutalise the lower population. To quote Edmund Burke once more: "Where the laws were not bloody they were worse; they were slow, cruel, and outrageous in their nature, and kept men alive only to insult in their persons every one of the rights and feelings of humanity."

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## III.

Deprived though the Irish people were of political existence, and reduced in the social scale to a condition which made them the object of wanton insult and habitual contempt, they nevertheless preserved a marvellous vitality. Hidden away in their ignominous seclusion, they cherished vivifying qualities which saved them from extinction, and enabled them to spring again into life once the penal pressure was relaxed. That body and soul held together, despite the crushing calamities which overwhelmed the nation, is a strange fact in history. But the reasons are not far to seek. A great deal was due to the hardiness and elasticity of the Irish nature; to the healthy conditions of family life; to the tenacity with which the people clung to ancient usages and maintained their reverence for worthy ideals; to the poetic temperament which mastered sorrow by giving it voice in language rigidly measured, yet intensely expressive; to the intellectual vivacity which disposed them to throw with ease their interest into remote concerns; and to the spiritual cast of their mind which, when customary joys and earthly hopes had vanished, supplied an assuagement that would have had no power to comfort a grosser nature. Furthermore, the courage of the people was sustained at high pressure by the consciousness that they suffered in a good cause—for their nation, and for their religion. And lastly, the constant intercourse they carried on with foreign countries—an intercourse rendered practicable by circumstances over which, so to say, the penal code had no control—freshened the atmosphere in which they lived; kept them from losing self-respect in their daily relations with insolent oppressors; and provided for the Gaelic spirit an outlet which the law-makers hardly imagined to exist, and which they could no more close up than they could shut out the sky that spread its cloud-tracked dome above the island.

In bodily habit the Irish were always remarkably strong, agile, and enduring. Their swiftness of foot astonished the Anglo-Normans, whose fleetest horsemen could not overtake them; and in the Continental wars, many centuries later, the enemy remarked the same

quality, and wondered to see how the Irish soldiers ran.—"But well-a-day," as the song says, "'twas *after* them" they ran. An old historian, Stanihurst, remarks that of all men the Irish are the "most patient in suffering, and rarely overcome by sufferings." Spenser notes that they are "great indurers of cold, labour, hunger, and all hardnesse." "As for abstinence and fasting, which these days make so dangerous," writes Campion, "this is to them a familiar kind of chastisement;" and he adds that the same, that is, the Irish people, "being virtuously brought up or reformed, are such mirrours of holiness and austeritie, that other nations retaine but a shewe or shadow of devotion in comparison to them." And M. de Latocnaye, observing the customs of the descendants of those "mirrours of austeritie," says that the way the fasts are kept in Ireland is really frightful. In fact the Irish, from remote times, were trained to hardiness. It was part of the moral and physical discipline all had to undergo. "The severities of climate they conquered by habit," writes Charles O'Conor in his "Dissertations on the Ancient History of Ireland;" "and those of famine they encountered by an abstinence practised from infancy. These conquests over themselves entered into the manners of the nation."[1] "In Ireland," observes Mr. Wakefield, "man resembles not the dull and insensible Laplander, or the indolent and placid native of an eastern climate: he has a soul that kindles quickly, and a body that labour cannot destroy." Such a people were not likely to sell their pearl of price for a mess of pottage, or to let their spirit sink utterly in the presence of temporal disaster.

So stringent and searching were the laws against education, that it seemed impossible for the Catholics to elude the doom of ignorance to which the code condemned them. By an Act of William III., no Protestant in Ireland was allowed to instruct any Papist; and by an Act of Anne, no Papist was allowed to instruct any other Papist. Schoolmasters were hunted like the priests.[2] It was forbidden to go abroad for education; and anyone who did so incurred a forfeiture of

[1] Referring to the training given in early times to the governing classes of Erin, the writer has the following passage:—"They began with the education of youth in their early infancy, by taking them off from all habits of idleness, and training them to laborious exercises of body and mind; on the one side, shooting, running, wrestling, performing martial evolutions, sustaining fatigues, and sometimes the rigour of hunger and cold; on the other, they made them try their strength of genius in poetry, which took in all subjects; initiated them in the mysteries of artful diction and powers of true eloquence. All or most of these things were *absolutely necessary* to young princes, to the candidates for magistracy, and to the *Ollavain*, who, although ever so well qualified by descent, were set aside from the dignities of government, and even of their particular families, unless they could prove their title by *great talents*, martial and literary."—"Dissertations," &c. First Edition (1753).

[2] Anyone who wishes to have a true and vivid picture of Ireland in the penal days, and to verify instances of the hunting of priests and schoolmasters, should read the 2nd vol. of Mr. Lecky's "History of England in the Eighteenth Century." Mr. Lecky's authorities are, for the most part, taken from original documents lately rendered accessible in the Irish Record

all right to property present or prospective, as also did the person who made any remittance of money or goods for the maintenance of any Irish child educated in a foreign country. But here the old love of learning stimulated the Irish, and made them fertile in resource. Gentlemen's sons were sent to the sea-ports, provided with indentures of apprenticeship to friendly merchants, who took care of them, watched for a safe opportunity, and despatched them, ostensibly on commercial business, to a foreign port, whence they made their way to the college in which they were to receive their education. Or, they got down to the remote parts of the coast, and were taken off by the smugglers, who anchored under the shadow of the sea-washed headlands to exchange at their leisure a cargo of clarets and brandies for the wool which the Irish were prohibited from exporting to England, and forbidden to manufacture into saleable goods at home. Aspirants to the priesthood embarked with the "wild geese"—the recruits for the Irish Brigade—in a like hazardous fashion: or got away in fishing-boats frequenting these coasts; and were satisfied if landed anywhere on the Continent, being fully prepared to trudge across mountain and plain with their faces turned towards Santiago or Salamanca, Lisbon or Louvain. The return home was effected through the same friendly agency. Priests, friars, and the alumni of the secular colleges were smuggled into their native island with the rest of the contraband freight.

Scholars of humbler rank, and others who could not reach the Continent, repaired to the hedge schools for instruction. It was the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. Master and scholars assembled in the safest spot they could find: on the sheltered side of a hedge, in a dry ditch, or on the edge of a wood, and worked away at the three R.'s, the classics, and their native tongue, prepared in dangerous times to hide their books and disperse over the country at a moment's notice. The hunted schoolmaster had one chance more than the hunted priest; for while the latter dared not fly from the altar, the pedagogue had only to throw his Horace into a thorn bush, walk away with his hands in his pockets, and devote his attention to farming operations in adjacent fields. This open-air school system was not felt as too great a hardship by people who were denied the shelter of a roof when they gathered round the altar of their God; and, besides, out-of-door studies had been the rule in the good old times: their great saints and great scholars, and the foreign youths who flocked to the classes of the famous teachers, had made their studies under the vault of heaven, only amid more peaceful surroundings. Dr. Newman, speaking in his "Historical Sketches," of the ancient Irish, says: "It

Office, and the Irish State Paper Office. In fact, he has done for this period of Irish history what the Rev. George Hill and Mr. Prendergast have respectively done for the eras of the Ulster Plantation and the Cromwellian settlement.

is impossible not to admire and venerate a race which displayed such inextinguishable love of science and letters."[1] Their descendants in the eighteenth century manifested the same noble ardour, and are entitled to the same esteem. And, what is worthy of remark, the peasantry imbibed the same taste as their social superiors, and became athirst for a kind of knowledge which it was almost impossible they ever could turn to practical account. The Munster people excelled all others in taste for learning, and Kerry was believed to have the best schools. Thither resorted students from other parts to share the advantages enjoyed by the young mountaineers. The "ditches full of scholars," which Arthur Young tells us he often saw in his travels through Ireland, had many lads among them, who, when they had got enough Latin, meant to sail away, and read their theology on the Continent. Munster, in fact, was a sort of preparatory school for Salamanca. In those days Latin was freely spoken, especially in Kerry. Boys were often met with on the lonely hill-sides conning their Homer, and runners and stable-boys in the service of the Protestant gentry could quote for you a verse of Horace, or season their remarks with a line from Virgil. Dr. Smith, in his "History of Kerry," observes that classical reading "extends itself even to a fault among the lower orders in Ireland, many of whom have a greater knowledge in that way than some of the better sort in other places."

It was from the wild coasts of Cork and Kerry that the greater number of students were shipped off, and the largest migration of "wild geese" took place. The bays, stretching inland for miles, indented with safe creeks, guarded by precipitous mountains, and protected by outposts of islands, seemed to have been specially designed by nature for this service. It would have required an army to watch the approaches on the land side through morasses and intricate mountain-paths; and the navy of England had other work to do than cruise in these western waters, give chase to swift smugglers, French corvettes, and Spanish privateers, and board the fleets of boats that dexterously combined fishing and smuggling. A sloop of war might ride in Bantry Bay or in the Kenmare river, but the tidy fishing smacks, with their freight of outlawed Papists and contraband goods, could meanwhile run safely up to Glengariff or hide in Adrigoole. Should a hostile vessel enter at one end of Valencia harbour, the foreign sail could instantly heave up the anchor and scud away by the off-side of the island, which forms a breakwater there for the rolling surge. Moreover, service on that coast was eminently dangerous to British mariners; for lawless dwellers on the heights, looking out for suspicious sail, made no scruple to decoy them on the rocks, and were as expert, or nearly so, in this atrocious work as were the wreckers of Brittany, or Cornwall, or Northumberland.

[1] Article on the Northmen and Normans in England and Ireland.

By whatsoever way the recruiting officers—Irish gentlemen in the service of France—entered the kingdom, they usually contrived to reach their destination in the interior, where they were certain to meet with little difficulty in enlisting men for the Brigade. Irish lads gladly followed the officers whose name and family they held in respect, and were more than willing to "serve the foe of Ireland's foe," on any battlefield in the world. The difficulty was to get them away in twos and threes, and muster them on the landward slope of one of those western mountains, preparatory to a march over the heights. But one way or another it was done. The "wild geese" flock to the rendezvous; trusty guides lead the way along hardly perceptible tracks; by sundown they are safe from pursuit, and have only the difficulties of the slippery ascent to face. Onward they go, leaping over the torrents in the way, listening for the dash of the waterfall whose waving silver line is by day a landmark on the route, and skirting the fern-fringed lough in whose motionless depth shines the pale face of a belated star. With dawn the broad-winged sea-bird floats inland, the heron alights in the pool. By-and-by a freshening breeze announces that the Atlantic is near, and presently, turning the shoulder of a mountain, the wayfarers behold spread out beneath them the bay on which the sun is pouring down a shower of golden rays, while the morning mists are rolling off to seaward. With strange emotion they descry, rocking in the shadow of the headland, the boat with flapping sails waiting to take them off to the trim vessel anchored in the roadstead. At evening watch they are leagues from shore; silence follows the lively talk on deck, and a meditative mood succeeds. The exiles look out now beyond their comrades' faces; on the one hand they see the sun going down behind broad bars of purple and gold; on the other lies a waste of water with an undulating line of blue upon the vanishing horizon. The Irish lads may yet see, many a time, the sun set gloriously, dropping in a sea of fire behind an Alpine ridge, or sinking in splendour beneath some featureless northern plain; but the faint blue line—the holy hills of Ireland—they never again shall see, except in dreams.

Regimented and officered according to their nationality, the Irish soldiers could not, even if they had been willing, forget their native land. The word of command was given in the dear old Gaelic; their native music inspirited the troops; they marched into the field to decide the fate of battles to the tune of "The White Cockade;" when their comrades fell around them, and their spirits sank in thinking of their loss, "St. Patrick's Day," struck up by the regimental band, gave them heart once more.[1] The Abbé MacGeoghegan had

[1] "They (the Irish soldiers) refused to march to the French tunes, and on all military occasions insisted on the use of their national airs—a gratification that was conceded to

the Irish soldiers in his mind when he wrote his "History of Ireland," and he dedicated that work to the Brigade. Catechisms were supplied to them from the Irish printing-presses of the foreign convents, priests from the Irish colleges gave them missions; and friars of their own nation accompanied them to the field, heedless of the balls that sometimes laid them low beside the wounded of the rank and file. Strange scenes relieved the tragic drama of the field when the Irish soldiers of the Brigade recognised countrymen of their own in the English regiments serving in the hostile armies. No unexpected meeting was this on the side of the poor fellows who shouldered the guns of the High Allies. Their sole object when, pretending to be Protestants, they enlisted in the British army was to get out to the Continent, and desert to the side which had all their sympathy on the first opportunity that should offer. No mere mercenaries were these soldiers of Louis of France or Philip of Spain. "Driven by iniquitous laws against their religion to take service under the banners of Catholic sovereigns, they reflected honour on their native land, and signalised themselves by bravery and fidelity which could not be excelled. Officered by the representatives of those chieftains who had forfeited everything, 'save honour,' for their faith, the humblest soldier who marched in those battalions was animated by the same spirit that impelled the O'Neills and O'Donnells to forsake a country where they dared not worship God according to the custom of their fathers. In fact, their love of their religion gave them an individuality that cannot be found in any other people. Unlike the hireling gladiators who fought for pay, irrespective of any other consideration, the soldiers of the Irish Brigades are invariably found under the banners of those sovereigns who not only professed their creed, but also provided colleges and altars for their persecuted and exiled priesthood. Follow them where you will—from Deventer to Fontenoy, from Louvain to Frankfort—the love of their religion is just as conspicuous as their gallantry is undoubted."[1] Their bones were left to moulder in soldiers' graves on the battlefields of Italy and Spain, in the trenches of French Flanders, and on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. Surely it was a better fate for those military exiles to fall in the fierce onslaught, and rest with gallant comrades in distant "unhereditary graveyards" than to perish of famine or plague in Erin and swell the fevered sod round the desecrated abbeys of their own land. Probably no calculation has ever been made of the total

them, though the same favour was denied to the Swiss. For this, however, there was a reason: the music of the *Ranz des Vaches* awoke in the breast of the latter such a passionate longing for home, that it often led to desertion; whilst in the poor Irishman, whose home was lost to him, no such danger was to be feared."—"Life of Samuel Lover," vol. ii., p. 11.

[1] Preface to Matthew O'Conor's "Military History of the Irish Nation." (Duffy's edition.)

number of Irishmen who died in the service of continental states during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the Abbé Mac Geoghegan states that, from calculations and researches made at the war office, it was ascertained that from the arrival of the Irish troops in France, in 1691 to 1745, the year of the battle of Fontenoy, more than 450,000 Irishmen died in the service of France.

As for the native Irish nobility and gentry, they took full advantage of the honourable career opened to them in the service of continental sovereigns. All the great Milesian families, and nearly all the families of the old English of Ireland, had relatives in the service of some European emperor or king. At one time, it is said, there were more than thirty Irishmen general officers in the Austrian service. There were Rothes, Lacys, Brownes, O'Dwyers, and O'Rourkes, in Russia; MacCarthys in Portugal; O'Dowdas in Venice; Os and Macs too numerous to mention in Spain and France.[1] "There were, indeed Irish Roman Catholics of great ability, energy, and ambition," writes Lord Macaulay, "but they were to be found everywhere except in Ireland: at Versailles, and at St. Ildefonso, in the armies of Frederick, and in the armies of Maria Teresa. One exile became a marshal of France, another became Prime Minister of Spain. If he had stayed in his native land he would have been regarded as an inferior by all the ignorant and worthless squireens who drank the glorious and immortal memory. In his palace at Madrid he had the pleasure of being assiduously courted by the ambassador of George II., and of bidding defiance to the ambassador of George III. Scattered over all Europe were to be found brave Irish generals, dexterous Irish diplomatists, Irish counts, Irish barons, Irish knights of St. Louis and of St. Leopold, of the White Eagle, and of the Golden Fleece, who, if they had remained in the house of bondage, could not have been ensigns of marching regiments, or freemen of petty corporations." Many of the Irish officers married into families of distinction on the Continent, kept up friendly intercourse with their relatives in the old land, taught their children to cherish a lively affection for the island of the

[1] Mr. Lecky devotes some pages of his recently published history to a review of the Irish element which was so conspicuous during the last century in the continental armies and at foreign courts. Thus he says: "Among Spanish generals the names of O'Mahony, O'Donnell, O'Gara, O'Reilly, and O'Neill, sufficiently attest their nationality, and an Irish Jacobite, named Cammock, was conspicuous among the admirals of Alberoni. Wall, who directed the government of Spain with singular ability from 1754 to 1762, was an Irishman, if not by birth, at least by parentage. . . . . The physician of Sobiesky, King of Poland, and the physician of Philip V. of Spain were both Irish, and an Irish naturalist, named Bowles, was active in reviving the mining industry of Spain in 1752. In the diplomacy of the Continent Irish names are not unknown. Tyrconnel was French ambassador at the court of Berlin. Wall, before he became chief minister of Spain, had represented that country at the court of London. Lacy was Spanish ambassador at Stockholm, and O'Mahony at Vienna."—"History of England in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 262-264.

Gael, and stretched out a helpful hand to young men of the nation who might have to seek their fortune abroad. The Irish element thus introduced in foreign armies had a most important effect on the tide of battle and the issue of campaigns. It was said in the English House of Commons that more injury was done by those exiles to England and her allies than if all the Irish Catholics had been left in the possession of their estates in Ireland.

The effect of all this on the Catholics gentle and simple at home can well be imagined. They had constant intelligence of what was going on in the great world, and took the liveliest interest in military affairs and the policy of states. In the dilapidated mansions of the impoverished gentry, in the cabins of the peasantry, among the delvers and ditchers in the fields, on board the hookers tossing on the waves, you might hear the manœuvres of warlike hosts and the fortunes of rival dynasties discussed. In their hearts the Irish acknowledged no allegiance except to the exiled Stuarts; they talked of James II., "the descendant of the renowned Milesians," as if they had known him personally; the Pretender was, in their parlance, "the son of the king," and they had a fellow-feeling with the prince who would not give up his religion for the crown of the British isles. Maria d'Este was the object of a romantically loyal devotion, and one of the native poets composed a "Lament for the Queen," on the occasion of her death. The Irish poetry of the eighteenth century is full of the allusions to the interests and events of the time. The songs are about "the nobles of Spain," as the recruiting officers were called; about Louis and his stately ships sailing in pride o'er the sea; about lovers who went to France and never would return; about maidens who sell their rock, and sell their reel, and sell their only spinning-wheel, to buy their love a sword of steel.

"Whatever," says Samuel Johnson, "withdraws us from the power of the senses—whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present—advances us in the dignity of human beings." From this point of view, therefore, as well as from others, it was a blessing for the Irish that their foreign relations were, in those days, so extensive and of such absorbing interest.

The author of the "Historical Survey of the South of Ireland" makes a curious remark in reference to the peasantry of Munster, whom he found, in spite of their poverty, quite divested of the simplicity of the shepherd state. "These peasants," he observes, "have no sheepishness about them, are under no embarrassment when you speak to them, seem never at a loss, and are blessed with an abrupt and sudden promptitude of reply." He accounts for the contrast between the intelligence of these poor men and the "surly awkwardness of our English clowns," by supposing that the latter, being intent upon their own proper affairs, are not at the expense of thinking upon

other subjects; whereas these poor men, having neither labour nor trade to engage their attention, are more occupied with other people's affairs than their own. Dr. Campbell appears never to have noticed the existence of the foreign element in the home life of the Irish Catholics. Nor does its influence appear to have been recognised by Mr. Trotter, who, travelling through Ireland at a much later period, and mixing much with the people, noticed their aptitude for discussing warlike subjects. "The military genius of this surprising people," he remarks, "is often seen breaking forth in the lowest classes," whom he had heard analysing "with contemptuous coolness and wonderful sagacity the exploits and violences committed against them." "War," he continues, "is the darling theme of the Irishman—the difficulties of a siege, a daring enterprise, rapid expeditions through the country, and all the varieties of a campaign he relishes, understands, and shows he could well bear his part in them if opportunity occurred."[1]

France was regarded by the Irish in the eighteenth century with the same admiration and gratitude that Spain had attracted in earlier times. Not that Spain was loved the less; but circumstances had made intercourse with France at that period more constant and more intimate. In each of those great kingdoms the Irish exile was made welcome. He became a naturalised subject of his Catholic majesty the moment he set his foot on the soil of Spain; and, on landing in France, he enjoyed a like privilege, and was placed by the fact on the same equality with the king's other subjects. The dream of the Irish in the last century was that deliverance would come to them through France.[2]

Mr. Gladstone, referring on a recent occasion to the Ireland of the last century, observed that a state of things prevailed in the island a hundred years ago, which "we all look back upon now with pain and shame," and admit to have been intolerable; "and many of us," he adds, "would say that if there had been any tolerably clean-handed Power able to interfere, and able to right the wrongs of Ireland, that Power would have deserved the gratitude of mankind."[3] Indeed, no one at the present day sees anything mysterious in the attraction which drew the Irish people towards the Catholic nations of Europe. They had had their foreign relations, and generally of a friendly kind, before their sufferings on account of religion properly speaking began; but when persecution on a gigantic scale was inaugurated, these ties

[1] John Bernard Trotter, private secretary to Charles James Fox, published his "Walks through Ireland in 1812, 1814, and 1817;" a very interesting account of the scenery of the country and of the character of the people.

[2] See a curious instance of this expectancy in the notes to "Legend Lays of Ireland," by Lageniensis, p. 113.

[3] Speech of Mr. Gladstone before the National Conference on the Eastern Question, Dec. 8, 1876.

became more closely drawn. Foreigner was in their language a word only applied to the English; continental manners and continental speech were a passport to their favour. "The Irish are fond of strangers," writes M. de la Boullaye le Gouz, who was travelling in Ireland when the great rebellion broke out, "and it costs little to travel amongst them. They love the Spaniards as their brothers, the French as their friends, the Italians as their allies, the Germans as their relatives." And he had himself experience of their prepossessions in favour of continental strangers. On one occasion he was surrounded in the open country by a detachment of Irish soldiers; but as soon as they learned he was a Frankard, and neither Sassenach nor English, they immediately made him offers of service. His countryman, M. de Latocnaye, whose tour was made in more peaceful times, could bear the same testimony; for, on entering the house of a poor family in the country, he was received with such special marks of kindness that he concluded they took him for an escaped French prisoner, and considered him entitled to their heartiest sympathy.

Meanwhile, the privileged or Protestant class, keeping the Catholics at arm's length, and taking not the slightest interest in their concerns, remained in surprising ignorance of all that was going on outside of their own contracted circle. Their stupid exclusiveness hoodwinked them completely. Dr. Smith, at the very time that the liveliest intercourse was carried on between the native Irish and the Catholic nations, speaks of "the great remoteness of Ireland from the Continent of Europe;" and the philosopher, Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, who, as became a member of the English interest was gravely apprehensive on the subject of impending war with Spain, and was organising a little army of some thirty good Protestants of Cloyne for the security of peaceable people in those dangerous times, was extremely surprised to find that the Papists, who, as he himself acknowledged, were eight to one of the Protestants in the province of Munster, had earlier intelligence of what was passing than the loyal members of the establishment. "By what means (they got the intelligence) I know not; but the fact is certainly true," wrote the worthy bishop to one of his correspondents. Had our oft-quoted friends, the two English gentlemen, called at the palace of Cloyne after instead of before their visit to Kinsale, they might possibly have helped the philosopher to a solution of the problem; for those intelligent tourists met an adventure while in that port, and had, as they believed, a narrow escape from being carried away to the peninsula in a Spanish privateer commanded by an Irishman named Brian, and having Irish sailors among the crew.

By-and-by the American war broke out, and afforded another subject of intense interest to the Irish of Ireland. There was, indeed, no military migration to the shores of the western continent; but there

were Irishmen and sons of Irishmen in thousands in the republican ranks fighting with the heartiest good-will against the enemies of the old land and the tyrants of the new. Four-fifths of the Pensylvania line, Washington's surest troop, were Irish, six colonels of the first regiments raised in Pensylvania being of the same nation. The Irish contingent amounted to 16,000 men, included in the different corps of the republican army; and these were not all Catholic Irish of the old stock; there was among them a strong force of Protestants whose fathers had been forced to emigrate from Ulster when the woollen trade of Ireland was sacrificed to the commercial interests of England. The father and mother of the Sullivans, whose services were so conspicuous in the war of independence, were natives of the south of Ireland. Commodore Barry, the "father of the American Navy," and the first to hoist afloat the flag of the Union, was born in Wexford. General Moylan, commander of the gallant dragoons, was a native of Cork. Charles Thompson, secretary to the first Congress, came from Derry. The first daily paper published in America was issued by John Dunlap of Strabane, printer to the first Congress, and owner of the press which first set in type the "Declaration of Independence." Colonel John Nixon, an Irishman, read for the first time to the people from the centre window of the hall in which Congress met, this momentous Declaration, among the signers of which were nine men of Irish origin. Some men of that race gave valuable assistance in framing the Constitution, and others had seats in the first Congress. The first governor of Pensylvania, after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, was a native of Dublin, George Bryan, who was mainly instrumental in procuring the passage of a law for the gradual abolition of slavery in his adopted State.[1] Pensylvania was in all its deparments strongly Irish. "It is a fact," wrote Benjamin Franklin, in 1784, "that the Irish emigrants and their children are now in possession of the government of Pensylvania, by their majority in the assembly, as well as a great part of the territory; and I remember well the first ship that brought any of them over." But, in point of fact, the Irish were everywhere throughout the States, and in every department of civil and military life, labouring with might and main in the cause of liberty. "Whilst the Irish emigrant," says a good authority, "was fighting the battles of America by sea and land, the Irish merchants, particularly at Charlestown, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, laboured with indefatigable zeal, and at all hazards, to promote the spirit of enterprise, to increase the wealth, and maintain the credit

[1] We take the above examples of the services which Irishmen or their descendants rendered to the Republic in the day of its trial and struggle from D'Arcy M'Gee's "Irish Settlers in America," a work overflowing with interesting matter, and written with the author's usual clearness and grace.

of the country; their purses were always open, and their persons devoted to the common cause. On more than one imminent occasion Congress owed their existence, and America, possibly, her preservation, to the fidelity and firmness of the Irish." [1]

Washington and other chiefs of the Republic tendered their acknowledgments to the distinguished Irishmen who lent their aid in the great struggle, and to the gallant troops of the same nation who bore the burden of the day of conflict and victory. Congress sent an address to the Irish people in 1775, expressing gratitude for the friendly disposition they had shown towards the Republic, and avowing the sympathy felt by Americans for the sufferings of Ireland. In the shock caused by the American revolution, parties at home with whom obtuseness had been a virtue improved by cultivation, suddenly awoke to the perception of the influence the Irish had exercised on recent events. It was acknowledged in 1780 that America was lost in Ireland; and Mr. Gardiner, afterwards Lord Mountjoy, remarked in the Irish Parliament that England had America detached from her by force of Irish emigrants.

But whether parties or parliaments recognised such facts or shut their eyes to their existence, the native race at home knew well the influence of the Irish element abroad, and in the midst of their degradation drew consolation from the thought of what their kith and kin accomplished in another sphere. The Cromwellian squire or the Williamite lord, as he walked along the high-road, might plume his vanity on the success a son or brother had obtained in the scuffle for place and pension at the viceroy's court; but the poor Catholic gentleman who trod the way in humbler guise, felt, no doubt, a prouder heart-beat while thinking of the distinction some scion of his house had won in the camp or in the court of a greater world.

Among the good influences at work during the penal days, a high place must be given to that exercised in social life by the clergy, who, owing to the necessities of the time, lived domesticated with the people. The secular priests returned from their foreign colleges to the scene of their apostolic labours, and lived, when the times were sufficiently peaceful to allow of their doing so, dispersed in the obscure quarters of cities and towns, and in farm-houses throughout the country; while the friars, after going through their noviciate in the Dominican houses at Lisbon, Toledo, or Rome, or in the Franciscan convents of Italy, Germany, and Flanders, made their way to the ruins of the monasteries of their order, took up their abode, two or three together, in a thatched corner of choir or aisle; or, failing this, built cabins for themselves within sight at least of the roofless church and the silent

[1] See *note* in vol. ii. of the Marquess de Chastellux's "Travels in North America," by the translator of the Dublin editions (1787), an English gentleman who resided in America at the period of the War of Independence.

belfry, and waited until better times enabled them to take a farm and live on it without apprehension, while perhaps doing parish duty in their district.

The bishops were fortunate when they possessed a modest thatched dwelling of their own in a retired part of their diocese, or an obscure quarter of the episcopal city. Dr. O'Gallagher, while Bishop of Raphoe, was obliged to seek refuge in one of the small islands of Lough Erne, where, dressed in peasant costume "he secured, amongst the humble but trusty clansmen of the Gallacher sept, a secure asylum." In this retreat he "re-wrote and prepared for the press the fragmentary sermons which he had from time to time preached in Irish to the flock entrusted to his pastoral charge." When translated, in 1737, to Kildare, he lived in a village in the bog of Allen, and ordained on a hill some young priests whom he sent to finish their studies to France, Spain, or Italy.[1] Members of the lordly house of Butler who filled the archiepiscopal See of Cashel in the last century were poorly housed in the Galtee mountains, in the vicinity of their ancestral estates. Dr. James Butler, who died in his eighty-third year, in 1774, was "in his old age permitted to dwell quietly in a humble thatched cabin, which occupied the site of the present archiepiscopal residence in Thurles. Hitherto, almost uninterruptedly the Archbishops of Cashel had no fixed place of residence; their pastorals and letters are all dated from *our place of refuge*.[2] Dr. O'Callaghan of Ferns, though he resided in his diocese, had to assume the name of Walker, in order to conceal himself and to save his life; while his successor, Dr. Sweetman, did not escape so well, but was taken up and confined in the Castle of Dublin on a malicious charge of high treason during the administration of the Duke of Portland, in 1752. The primate, Dr. O'Reilly, who died in 1758, resided in a farmhouse near Drogheda, thereby enjoying a better position than his predecessor, Dr. Mac Mahon, who occupied a still humbler tenement, and went by the name of Mr. Ennis.[3] Bishop de Burgo, author of the "Hibernia Dominicana," dwelt in a lowly cottage near the ruins of St. John's Abbey in Kilkenny. In 1757, there met by stealth in the castle of Trimbleston seven of the Catholic bishops to confer on matters of importance; and tradition says that these prelates were clad in frieze like farmers, in order to conceal their ecclesiastical dignity.[4]

All through these troubled times the bishops and clergy of Ireland received constant and liberal remittances from the Sovereign Pontiffs. "In truth," observes Dr. Renehan, "some provisions of the kind must

[1] See the memoir prefixed by the Rev. Canon Ulick J. Bourke to his edition of Dr. O'Gallagher's sermons, lv. lx.

[2] See Dr. Renehan's "Collections on Irish Church History," vol. i., pp. 322-323.

[3] See Stuart's "Historical Memoirs of the City of Armagh," pp. 399-406.

[4] See the "Diocese of Meath," vol. ii., p. 165; vol. iii., p. 670.

have been made by the Holy See for the ministers of religion in this country, or else, humanly speaking, they would have died out within a few years—the very object at which the Government aimed in all their legislation.[1] These pensions were forwarded regularly from Rome until Pope Pius VII. was driven into exile; and the bounty of the Holy Father was distributed so discreetly, that few except the Irish bishops themselves seem to have been aware that such subsidies were received.[2]

The priests were of necessity constantly on foot, or in less severe times on horseback; they could not gather their flock around them; they were obliged to go to the houses of their parishioners. The friars were often out "questing." All were heartily welcomed and hospitably entertained, whether at gentlemen's houses few and far between, or in the more frequent farmers' cottages. It was a rule that the priest should give an instruction to the family in whose house he put up for the night, and examine the children in the catechism. To the junior members of the household this part of the evening routine was not always the most agreeable, especially as the lesson in the catechism was likely to be supplemented by a few questions in grammar: an association of sacred and secular studies suggested by the catechisms then in use, which, printed in the Gaelic character on the Continent,[3] were provided not unfrequently in the form of an appendix, with a popular treatise on the vernacular tongue. But it was a rare delight to all when, the labour of the day well over, and the circle widened by the dropping in of neighbours great and small, the priest of the parish or Father Francis from the abbey, as the case might be, poured out his treasures of historic and legendary lore; went back to his college days in distant lands, described the manners and customs of great nations where the Catholics held their heads high, and the king and queen and all the nobility went to Mass; and recounted with kindling eye the exploits of the soldiers of the brigade, and the story of the field where they perished. And as the good priest talked on, the listeners saw in the blazing turf long pilgrim processions arriving within sight of the city of St. James; or, in the broken lights and shadows cast upon the rafters, descried the wooded hills of Galicia, St. Isidoro on the Roman height, the spires of Brabant, the gates and towers of Seville. Meanwhile, the pensive-eyed girls heard these words set, as it were, to their favourite airs—"The Blackbird," and "Shule Aroon;" and the martial youths matured their plans for fighting Almanza next day in the stubble-field, and defending Saragossa in the rath upon the hill.

[1] "Collections on Irish Church History," p. 302. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 373., *note.*

[3] An interesting account of the books printed for the Irish in the 17th and 18th centuries, at Antwerp, Louvain, Paris, and Rome, will be found in Anderson's "Historical Sketches of the Native Irish" (1828) section i.

It was thought by Burke and others that this intimate association of the priests with the people was detrimental to the clergy, who lost, as it was supposed, in familiar intercourse with the unlettered a good deal of the culture which they had acquired in the course of their foreign education. However this may have been, there can be no doubt that the people benefited largely by the close relations into which pastor and flock were brought by the necessity of the times. "The Irish peasant," says Dean Cogan, "shared his frugal fare with the priest, gave him his humble bed, and staked his life and the welfare of his family for his protection. The priest, in return, gave spiritual instruction to the household, offered the Holy Sacrifice for his benefactors, administered the sacraments, blessed the peasant's home, and made his residence the tabernacle in which the Blessed Eucharist and the Holy Oils were sheltered for the salvation of the people."

Other sojourners by the domestic hearth there were who helped to keep the atmosphere fresh and genial. These were the schoolmasters and the itinerant musicians. The former were always considered entitled to free quarters; and when their scholastic avocations in the fields had been brought to a conclusion for the day, they withdrew to one humble household or another to join the evening cheer, and to rest for the night. Of course the harpers of repute were to be met with only in the houses of the gentry; they enjoyed a good position in right of their profession, and generally were gentlemen by birth and education. Among them were descendants of the O'Neills; excellent Greek and Latin scholars; proficients in Irish history and antiquities; and travelled men who had played before the Pretender in Edinburgh or Rome, and charmed with their native music the king of Spain in his court at Madrid. The Protestant gentry were as anxious as their Catholic neighbours to have the musicians tarry with them; but we are told that, "the harpers frequented mostly the houses of the old Irish families who had lost their titles, or were reduced more or less in their estates. When these minstrels appeared it was the signal for festivity among the young and old."[1] It is not difficult to imagine the delight of the audience that gathered in these country houses to hear the harpers perform the lively planxties, the inspiring marches, the pathetic strains of "the mother of sweet singers," as Pope styled Erin. The power of the instrument when an accomplished hand swept the strings can be inferred from the praises that have been bestowed on it. Dante had an Irish harp, and he admired its construction, and observed that its makers had been unrivalled in its use for ages. "No harp hath a sound so melting and prolonged as the Irish harp," says Lord Bacon. "Such

[1] Quoted from Dr. MacDonnell of Belfast, in "Conran's National Music of Ireland," p. 259.

music before or since did I never hear," remarks Evelyn, after listening to the performance of his old friend, Clerk, an incomparable player on the Irish harp; and the diarest adds that, in his judgment, the said instrument, which is neglected for its extraordinary difficulty, is "far superior to the lute itself, or whatever speaks with strings." As for the musical compositions of the Irish, it is enough to note that Handel said he would rather have been the composer of "Aileen Aroon" than of the music that had made him famous; that Haydn made a collection of Irish airs and was about to reset them when death called him to join the heavenly choir; that Beethoven loved these melodies and had many of them hung round his room.

Assuredly the attachment of the Irish to their national melodies and their native harpers did not lessen when they remembered that the music and the poetry of the old land had long been under a ban with themselves. By the Statute of Kilkenny it had been made penal for the English settlers to "entertain the bards, who perverted the imagination by romantic tales." Henry VIII., though he commanded the harp, the emblem of Ireland, to be quartered in the arms of England, showed great hostility to the music and poetry of the Gael.[1] Elizabeth, albeit showing a decided preference for the Irish tunes, as performed at court galas, ferociously pursued in Ireland the bards and rhymers, placing them in the same catagory as monks, friars, Jesuits, and such like: "a trayterous kind of people." Cromwell's soldiers boasted that they broke the harp wherever they found it. But the music of Erin could neither be murdered nor transplanted; and in the eighteenth century, especially in Connaught and Munster, its strains were heard in every direction. The daughters, as well as the sons, of the gentry, were taught the harp, and we are told that "every old Irish family had harps in plenty." In fact they carried out the ideas of their remote ancestors, who considered that, "from the king down, all should be able to sweep the strings in a masterly manner, when the harp was sent round at their feasts."

And the people at large, though they could not entertain the distinguished professors of the art in their houses, had a great deal of musical enjoyment in their own way. Harpers of a humbler grade than the O'Carolans and the O'Neills, the Duigenans and the Hempsons; and performers on the Irish bag-pipe, "which, to my uncultivated ear," says Dr. Campbell, "is not an instrument so unpleasant as the lovers of Italian music represent it," were constantly seen and heard in the cabins of the peasantry. The people knew very well how to turn a tune; they were passionately fond of the old airs; and they seasoned their occupations with songs, appropriate to every

[1] "Whilst the harp was honourably hung in the quarterings of England, the unhappy harpers were both hung and quartered in Ireland."—"Life of Samuel Lover," vol. ii., p. 7.

occasion. They had plough tunes and spinning tunes; boatmen's songs, and miller's and carter's songs; and lullabys or sleep-disposing melodies; they had music specially appropriate to each season of the year. They preserved their treasure of song as they preserved their immemorial traditions and their living faith; and this they did so well that, when, after the penal days had passed away, and the gentry had completely neglected the cultivation of Irish music, it was among the peasantry that Bunting and Joyce, Petrie and O'Curry, found the exquisite airs they desired to preserve for future generations. Dr. Petrie speaks of the music of Ireland as having been the exclusive property of the peasantry—the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the country. He observes that it is characteristic of their ardent and impassioned temperament, and expressive of the tone of feeling that has been for ages predominant. It was not to be found, he says, among the upper classes. "They were insensible to its beauty, for it breathed not *their* feelings; and they resigned it to those from whom they took everything else, because it was a jewel of whose worth they were ignorant."[1] "Pray go on collecting," he writes to one of the friends who helped him in his search for the ancient melodies; "it is a noble work to be employed upon—the building up a glorious monument to the cultivated genius, and the exquisite nature of a people, whose fate, alas! has not been a happy one."[2]

Hardly necessary is it to remark that the home life of the people was their dearest refuge—their impregnable stronghold. Not that iniquitous legislation had overlooked this sanctuary of divine faith and domestic virtue. The penal laws, as we have seen, sought to make the fourth commandment a dead letter by encouraging disobedience to parental authority, and rewarding rebellion with privilege and wealth. The code supplemented this attempt to set children against their parents, by endeavouring to disturb the relations between husband and wife; for, if the wife of a Catholic declared herself a Protestant, the law enabled her to compel her husband to give her a separate maintenance, and to transfer to her the custody and guardianship of all their children; and, as if to bring injury and insult to a climax every Catholic was by Act of Parliament deprived of the power of settling a jointure on his Catholic wife, or charging his lands with any provision for his daughters. Disruption of the strong and tender bond that held the Irish household as a Christian family was not to be effected by royal proclamation or parliamentary decree: nevertheless the legislation that aimed at depriving the naturally dependent members of the family of manly protection and necessary provision was felt as a biting insult and an inhuman tyranny.

In Irish households, high and low, the women throughout those

[1] Dr. Stokes's "Life of Petrie," p. 316. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 352.

troubled times kept well up to the Christian standard, cherishing the domestic virtues, accepting with patience their own share of suffering, defying the temptations held out by the enemies of the faith, refusing to barter the souls of the young, in the midst of calamity keeping the eternal reward in view, and daily exercising works of charity and zeal. As far as circumstances would allow, the people in their domestic life followed the traditional standard of their ancestors and preserved the customs of immemorial days.

Women, from the earliest times, have ever been held in great respect in Ireland. The Brehon law, by which the inhabitants of the territories outside the Pale were governed from long before St. Patrick's time, to the reign of James I., and according to whose provisions the people in many parts of the country continued, up to a comparatively recent period, to arrange their affairs and settle their disputes, secured to women the rights of property, and provided for their rational independence in a far more effectual way than was contemplated by other codes. In social life the spirit of the Brehon law was embodied, and transmitted to succeeding generations, in the customs and manners of the people. One cannot read the Annals of Ireland without observing how important was the position occupied by women in Erin. All, according to their degree, were expected to fill a part, both influential and honourable, in the constitution of the clan. A considerable share of the internal administration of the principality was intrusted to the wife of the chieftain or provincial king. The duties of hospitality—onerous and constant, and precisely defined by the Brehon law—were exercised by her. To her was entrusted the care of the poor and suffering. She was expected to be an encourager of learning, and a friend to the ollamhs or professors, a benefactor to the churches, and a generous helper of the religious orders.

While the chieftain was out fighting or taking preys from his enemies, the chieftain's wife kept everything in order in the little kingdom, and held herself ready, at a moment's notice, to protect her people from robbers or defend her castle from invaders. The mother of Hugh O'Neill is described by the annalists as "a woman who was the pillar of support, and maintenance of the indigent and the mighty, of the poets and exiled, of widows and orphans, of the clergy and men of science, of the poor and the needy; a woman who was the head of counsel and advice to the gentlemen and chiefs of the province of Conor Mac Nessa; a demure, womanly, devout, charitable, meek, benignant woman, with pure piety and the love of God and her neighbours." In the obituary notice of a certain great lady, the annalist tells us how she was "a nurse of all guests and strangers, and of all the learned men in Ireland;" of another we read that "she was the most distinguished woman in Munster in her time, in fame, hospitality, good sense, and piety." The old writers, in summing up the noble

qualities of an Irish chieftain's wife, do not omit to mention that she was distinguished by her checking of plunder, her hatred of injustice, by her tranquil mind and her serene countenance.

We get the portrait of a woman of this stamp, and a picture of the manners of the fifteenth century in Ireland, in the account of Margaret, the daughter of the king of Ely, and wife of Calvagh O'Carroll. This lady was accustomed to give a great feast twice in the year, bestowing "meate and moneyes, with all other manner of gifts," on all who assembled on these occasions. The guests took their places according as their names were entered in a roll kept for that purpose, while the chieftain and his wife devoted themselves entirely to their guests: Margaret "clad in cloath of gold, her deerest friends about her, her clergy and judges too; Calvagh himself being on horseback, by the church's outward side, to the end that all things might be done orderly, and each one served successively." On one of those days of festivity Margaret gave two chalices of gold, as offerings on the altar to God Almighty, and "she also caused to nurse or foster two young orphans." She was distinguished among the women of her time for preparing highways, and erecting bridges and churches, and doing "all manner of things profitable to serve God and her soule." Her days were shortened by a fatal cancer; and the annalist concludes his notice with a beautiful prayer, and a pathetic malediction. "God's blessing," he exclaims, "the blessing of all saints, and every other blessing from Jerusalem to Inis Gluair be on her going to heaven, and blessed be he that will reade and heare this, for blessing her soule. Cursed be that sore in her breast that killed Margrett."

And should one of these fair women, who acted well her part in the chieftain's household, renounce "all worldly vanityes and terrestriall glorious pomps" and betake herself to "an austere devoute life," in a monastery, the chronicler fails not to speed thither the blessings of guests and strangers, poor and rich, and poet-philosophers of Ireland, which he prays "may be on her in that life." In recording the erection of churches, and the foundation of monasteries, the old historians constantly note that it is a joint work of the chief and his wife. Sometimes, indeed, the wife seems to have been sole founder; and we are led to infer that she had at her disposal certain revenues, whether the property of the head of the clan, or the proceeds of her own dowry. We read that the wife of Stephen Lynch FitzDominick, while her husband was beyond seas in Spain, began, in the year 1500, to build a convent on an eminence over the sea at Galway. Church and steeple were finished before his return; and on entering the bay, he was much surprised to behold so stately a building on the heights. Having learned on his landing that the edifice had been erected by his own wife in honour of St. Augustine, he knelt down on the sea-shore, and returned thanks to heaven for inspiring her with that pious resolution.

Subsequently he took part in the good work, finished the monastery, and endowed it with rents and several lands. Another case in point may be noted in the story of the building of the famous Franciscan monastery of Donegal.

If the women of Erin took their full share of the burdens and responsibilities of life in those bygone stirring times, they were not for that excluded from participation in the pleasures of life and in the advantages of whatever culture was then attainable. Like their husbands, they were fond of travelling abroad, and made pilgrimages to St. James of Compostella, to Rome "the capital of the Christians," and even to more distant shrines. But it does not appear to have been customary for the chief and the chieftainess to leave home together: the one or the other should stay to receive strangers, entertain guests, and carry on the government of the principality. In days when certain important professions such as those of Brehon, poet, and historian, were hereditary in certain families, the women of those families received an education fitting them to take a part in the avocations of their male relatives. Thus, among the Brehons, who were the lawyers of the clans, there were women eminent as judges or expounders of the law; and in the learned families there were women historians and poets.[1] The learned men of Erin, it is evident, enjoyed the sympathy and appreciation of the daughters of the land, and were not ungrateful for the encouragement and hospitality they received. They inscribed the names of their lady friends on the tracts compiled for their use or at their desire. One of the very ancient Gaelic manuscripts still in existence is a tract entitled "History of the Illustrious Women of Erin;" another valuable relic of the olden times is inscribed "Lives of the Mothers of the Irish Saints."

It is interesting to learn what impression the women of Ireland at a later period—the middle of the seventeenth century—made on strangers from the classic land of Italy. The Rev. C. P. Meehan has enriched the fifth edition of his "Rise and Fall of the Irish Franciscan Monasteries, and Memoirs of the Hierarchy," with the original account of the journey from Kenmare to Kilkenny of Rinuccini, Archbishop of Fermo, who was sent to this country as papal nunzio in 1641. Massari, dean of Fermo, accompanied the nunzio as secretary, and wrote the narrative which is given in the appendix to the work just cited. The dean speaks more than once with genuine delight of the elegant hospitality with which the distinguished visitors were entertained by the lords and ladies of Munster, and specially dwells on the reception they received from Lady Muskerry, whose husband was then from home, either with the army of the Confederates, or in Dublin, discussing Lord Ormond's peace. "The women," he says, "are

[1] See Professor O'Curry's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish," vol. i., pp. 50 52.

exceedingly beautiful, and heighten their attractions by their matchless modesty and piety. They converse freely with everyone, and are devoid of suspicion and jealousy. Their style of dress differs from ours, and rather resembles the French; all wear cloaks with long fringes; they have also a hood sewn to the cloak, and they go abroad without any other covering for the head; some wearing a kerchief, as the Greek women do, which being gracefully arranged, adds, if possible, to their native comeliness."[1]

There may seem to have been but little relation between the position of a chieftainess in ancient times and that of the mistress of an Irish Catholic household in the eighteenth century; and yet, even during the penal days the spirit of the earlier time survived, the old ideal was not supplanted by anything less worthy. The houses of the reduced gentry were still the centre of a generous hospitality, and charity was dispensed from the gentleman's door with a liberality wholly incommensurate with the revenues of a fallen estate. The careful mother, who could not grace her home with the presence of the learned, sent forth her sons to encounter the risks of a perilous voyage and the dangers of foreign travel, that so they might escape the dreaded doom of ignorance; she lent her best efforts to the fostering of that magnanimous loyalty so requisite for the preservation of the ancient faith. The mother's lessons proved a stay and conscience to her sons when, in afterlife, temptations rudely pressed upon them. The mother's example taught her daughters how to unite a virile courage with womanly modesty and grace.

Nor was it among the higher classes alone that these character-

1 The Dean of Fermo does equal justice to the men of Ireland, who are, he says, "good-looking, incredibly strong, fleet runners, equal to any hardship, and indescribably patient. They are given to arms; and those who apply themselves to learning become highly distinguished in every domain of science." Of the people in general he speaks in high terms. "I have not words" he continues, "to describe to you the kindness and politeness which we experienced at the hands of this Irish people, whose devotion to the holy See is beyond all praise, and I assure you that I was often moved to tears when I saw them, wholly forgetful of self, kneeling in the very mire in order to kiss the nunzio's robe and hands, as if they were holy relics. At almost every stage of our journey the nunzio was escorted by strong squadrons of horse to protect him from the enemy. We are in Ireland! we are in Ireland! praise to God."

The scenery of the South does not pass unobserved. One part of the road is thus described: "From Ardtully our route lay over the mountains of the county of Cork, through that boggy region which the Irish call 'Sliabruacha'—blessed solitudes, indeed, where no sybarite chariot is to be seen, and where one is not stunned by that awful uproar which in Paris is incessant, and will not allow one to think of heaven or his soul." In another place the traveller remarks: "The county through which we passed, although mountainous, is picturesque, and everywhere covered with all sorts of cattle browsing in the rich pastures. Then we had very extensive valleys diversified by woods, not very dense indeed, and partaking less of the horrid than of the beautiful. Such was the general aspect of the scenery for several miles of our route. Once down from the mountains, we beheld an immense tract of lowland terminating in gentle hills and dales of surpassing loveliness, well tilled, abounding in herds, oxen, and sheep, from which fine wool is made."

istics remained distinctly marked during the days of the nation's trial; they were noticeable in the farmer's cottage and the peasant's hut. The poor man's wife did not turn the weary and the hungry from her door; she received the poor scholar with a motherly welcome;[1] she accustomed her children to think nothing of a run of two or three miles to the hedge school. By precept and by example, she taught them fidelity to the faith, love for the old land, reverence for God's ministers, and respect for learning. The high, moral tone pervading the social life of the humbler classes in Ireland, was at once the cause and consequence of the important position which the women maintained at the domestic hearth, and of the beneficial sway which they exercised among their neighbours of the same degree. The circumstances of the time were favourable to the growth of this influence. As a rule the women did not work in the fields: their occupations were of an indoor character; and the habits of the people, both men and women, were domestic. The latter half of the eighteenth century being happily free from such famines which had laid waste the country during the previous two hundred years and were fated to reappear at a later period, there was plenty of food for the people. The staff of life—the potato—was then in prime, as to quality and quantity. Each little holding produced a crop sufficient for the support of a numerous family, with a large surplus for the poultry that crowded round the door, and the pigs which even the poorest cottar reared; while a paddock was reserved from tillage as pasture for the high-boned native cow, which formed an important item of the live-stock. In the farmers' families linen and woollen stuffs were spun, woven, knitted, bleached, and dyed, and made into wearing apparel by the women. A spinning-wheel was as necessary a part of the furniture as a pot for cooking the stirabout. Public-houses were few and far between, facilities for locomotion were not abundant, and the men did not range to any great distance from home. Their amusement was to sit by the fire in the winter evenings, or smoke their pipes at the door in summer, listening to the story-teller or the singer, while their wives and daughters knitted or spun: all, young and old, being ready to break out into hilarious dance the moment a piper or fiddler appeared on the scene. Perhaps the greatest testimony borne to the genuine worth of the poor Irish Catholics was that afforded by the

[1] "In Ireland it is a custom, immemorially established, for those petty schoolmasters who teach in chapels, or temporary huts, *freely* to instruct such poor boys as come from *remote places*, and are unable to pay. The poor scholar, while he remains at the school, goes home, night and night about, with his school-fellows, whose parents that can afford it occasionally supply him with a few old clothes, as well as food and lodging. This appears, to be a faint emanation of the ancient custom in Ireland, so celebrated by historians, of supplying, at the national expense, all foreign students with meat, drink, clothes, lodging, books, &c. &c."—Dr. R. R. Madden's "History of Irish Periodical Literature," vol. ii. p. 153, *note*.

custom which prevailed among the Protestant and respectable classes of sending their children to be nursed or fostered by the peasantry. Sons and heirs destined to fill prominent and honourable posts, and daughters born to grace luxuriant homes, were in all trust committed to the care of peasant women, and grew from tender infancy to hardy childhood in the mountain cabins, sharing the homely fare and joining in the simple sports of their foster brothers and sisters. One thing was certain: the nurse's fidelity and affection could be implicitly relied on, and the gentleman's child would have no vice to unlearn when transferred from the peasant's guardianship to the protection of the parental roof.

Thus it was that the Irish, "true to the kindred points of heaven and home;" sustained in spirit by their intercourse with kindred and friendly races; beguiled in their sorrows by the poetry and music of their nation; passed through the penal days, and came forth in the end with a crushed and suffering body, truly, but with the living soul intact.[1] Though many a trial yet awaited the faithful nation, and sad chapters had still to be added to Erin's tearful story, the darkest hour had passed when, an American revolution and a French reign of terror having taught governments discretion, the worst provisions of the detestable code were repealed. A sorry enough figure the poor Catholics made when their chains were loosened. Their great-hearted Protestant fellow-countrymen, who spoke for them when they dared not breathe—the Grattans, the Currans, the Avonmores—no doubt were half-ashamed of the beggared, cowed, unsteady multitude wholly unaccustomed to corporate or political action, whom they strove to set on their feet as freemen. But the spirit which calamity had not vanquished soon worked from the inner to the outward sphere, and in another, and a no less eminent arena than the political, began the reconstruction of national life. In the restoration of Catholic society, and the building up of the material edifice of the church whose ruined monuments and institutions lay thickly scattered over the land, the people displayed an ardent energy and a self-denying generosity equal in their measure to the heroic endurance of the past. Political revolutions and legislative reforms swept away insuperable barriers: but it was the people themselves who wrought their own redemption. There were no millionaires to bestow princely gifts and offer munificent endowments; but the straitened multitude dropped their freely-bestowed alms into the treasury, and when the sums were added up the total exceeded a king's revenue. And not in money alone but in

[1] His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII., on the occasion of receiving an address at the Vatican, May 2, 1878, from an Irish deputation headed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin, observed that, "There was no parallel in the story of the nations, to the fortitude of the Irish in maintaining the faith, in spite of sufferings and tribulations endured from one generation to another."

men also did every family in the land send its contingent. The ranks of the priesthood were kept up by home levies, and that under circumstances which would in other countries have necessitated the introduction of a foreign missionary staff. And the women of Ireland:—they, too, had their part in the work, and their share in the reward laid up for good and faithful servants. Like the daughters of Job: *there were not found in all the earth women so beautiful, . . . . and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.*[1] It was their vocation to be either the guardians and example of the faith in the households of the half-emancipated nation; or in religious life the light of the ignorant, the comfort of the sorrowing, the support of the poor.

Thus, the steadfast generous multitude; the devoted priesthood; the faithful women with hearts enflamed with charity; performing each their allotted task, renovated the ruined structure, and fulfilled an enviable destiny. In the order of Providence it was decreed that in this wise should the nation with its church arise. And with the ordinance went forth the warning and the benediction: *They shall be cursed that shall despise thee, and they shall be condemned that shall blaspheme thee; and blessed are they that shall build thee up.*[2]

[1] Job, xlii. 15.

[2] Tobias, xiii. 16.

# MARY AIKENHEAD.

# MARY AIKENHEAD:

## HER LIFE, HER WORK, AND HER FRIENDS.

## Book I.

1787—1812.

### CHAPTER I.

MARY AIKENHEAD'S BIRTH—PARENTAGE—CHILDHOOD.

ABOUT the middle of the eighteenth century, a Scottish gentleman, David Aikenkead[1] by name, and holding a commission in the 26th Cameronian regiment, relinquished the military profession, married a Limerick lady, Miss Anne Wight, the daughter of Rice Wight, of the same family as that now represented by Lord Monteagle, and settled in Ireland, making the city of Cork his winter quarters, and having a house for summer residence at Kinsale. He did not long enjoy the ease of civil and domestic life, but died early, leaving two children, a

[1] "Aikenhead, of that ilk, Scotland, an ancient northern family, of which was David Aikenhead, Provost of Edinburgh, distinguished for his loyalty and virtue."—Burke's "Encyclopædia of Heraldry." For copies of a humorous poem, written on Provost Aikenhead by Leighton, afterwards Archbishop of Glasgow, see "Notes and Queries," vol. xi. The poem, or more properly the epigram, was a mere composition, the humour consisting of a play on the Provost's name: the Scottish word *aichen* signifying *oaken*. Two families of the name carried arms; oak leaves or acorns figuring in each case. "Adam Nisbitt, son of Sir Alexander Nisbitt, married Janet Aikenhead, grandchild of David Aikenhead, Provost of Edinburgh, and they were father and mother to Mr. Alexander Nisbitt, author of the 'System of Heraldry,' and the last male representative of the family of Nisbitt.'"—Playfair's "Family Antiquity," vol. viii. (Scotland) Appendix, cccxxv.

daughter, Anne, who afterwards married Dr. Galway of Cork, and a son, David, who, having studied medicine, established himself in due course as a practising physician and chemist in Cork, a city distinguished, at that time, for the number of well-qualified and successful practitioners it had produced.

Young David Aikenhead was not afraid to try his fortune, even on so well-occupied a field. His courage met with its reward, and before long he obtained the first much-coveted success, that of being pointed out as a rising man. He was remarkably handsome; his manner was kindly and agreeable, without pride or pretension of any kind; he had a thoroughly good heart; and while he secured the esteem of the wealthy and influential classes by his character and his skill, he earned the blessings of the poor by his charitable and humane disposition. Neither his political nor his religious principles were calculated to stand in the way of his advancement. Born, so to speak, in the Hanovarian ranks, he fell in well with the corporation and constituency of a city which never lost an opportunity of testifying its attachment to the sacred person of whatsoever royal George happened to occupy the throne, and which was never tired of ringing its bells in commemoration of victories won, whether by sea or land, over the French, Spanish, or Dutch enemies of the reigning dynasty. Strictly Protestant in his religious views, he found himself in sympathy with the vast majority of the country gentry, as well as with the magisterial magnates and the military and civil functionaries of the opulent southern city; all of whom held it as an article of faith, which even the evidence of their senses could not disturb, that Romanists were by nature an inferior order of beings, and that to be "Protestant" meant to be "respectable."

However, when it came to the question of choosing a wife, Dr. Aikenhead consulted neither his religious prepossessions nor his professional interests. He had met "a dangerous papist" in the person of gentle Mary Stacpole, the eldest daughter of a Catholic merchant of the city; he asked her to become his wife; she liked the handsome young doctor too well to refuse his suit; her parents were satisfied, and, on the 22nd of October, 1785, the marriage took place in Christ Church, Cork. But, to ease his conscience, the husband made one stipulation. Though his wife should be free to practise her own religion, she must not make Catholics of her children. It was clearly announced, and fully understood, that whatever children heaven blessed them with should be brought up as members of the church by law established.

On the 19th of January, 1787, their first-born—the future foundress of the Irish Sisters of Charity—came into the world. In due course, she was carried to the Protestant Church and baptised by the name of Mary. Soon after she was removed from the city, to be nursed on

Eason's Hill, a healthy suburb on the north side of the river, and was confided to the charge of a very model of an Irish nurse, a certain Mary Rorke, who, with her husband John, occupied a cottage in the above locality, at no great distance from Shandon church.

Eason's Hill was, in those days, a semi-rural site, commanding the Youghal road, and having houses and cottages on one side only of the way. The cottage in which little Mary Aikenhead's cradle was rocked was, like Mary Rorke herself, a model in its way. It was thatched in a style that was the admiration of the hill-side; there was a garden in front, and there was a low broad bench beside the door; and there were fine trees standing not too far off to guard and shelter its modest roof.

So well did the foster-parents fulfil their part, and so thoroughly did the hill-side agree with their precious charge, that it was thought advisable not to bring her back to the city, after two or three years, but to prolong still further her stay in the healthy cottage home, which, after all, was so easy of access that she could be visited every other day. She was, therefore, left undisturbed, and reared literally among the homely denizens of Eason's Hill. The only thing that troubled her parents was this, that she had completed her third year before she was able to speak. But, then, would she have a better chance of learning that necessary art among the witty, rapid-tongued citizens than among the simpler, and, perhaps, slower suburban residents? In point of fact, little Mary almost suddenly found the use of her tongue, and soon proved herself equal to any conversational demand made on her in the society of John and Mary Rorke and their friends. Simple good people they all were, such as they themselves would describe as "nice old neighbours:" very superior to the townspeople in general, who sometimes drank too much, and were unruly. The doctor's child was quite safe among them; and, indeed, had she been a little Irish queen, they could not have been fonder and prouder than they were of the beautiful, light-limbed, dark-eyed child, so full of life and spirits, and graceful loving ways.

Nurse Rorke soon noticed with delight how Miss Mary, though a little lady every inch of her, had no pride, but was good and affectionate and humane; and how, dressed in her pretty white frock, she played before the cottage door with the neighbours' children, just as if she were one of themselves. Still, it sometimes did try Mary Rorke's patience not a little to see her darling run to meet Shawn, the coal-porter, as he wended his way home from the town, seizing his brawny hand, twining her arms round his dusty sleeve, and fatally imperilling the whiteness of the dainty frock. No one knew better than the old man how to keep the exuberant young creature in a state of temporary quiescence, for her great delight was to stand by his knee and listen to his stories and songs. Though Shawn was her

special favourite among the old inhabitants, she had in the same ranks a great many other acquaintances of her own choosing, whose place in her esteem was only just not quite so high as his. As she never was ashamed of humble friends, her acknowledgment of her country connexions was sometimes rather amusing. "Well, my little girl, what news?" said the doctor to her one day, when she had been having her rosy cheeks admired. "What news, I say?" "Oh! father," immediately replied the child, in her eagerness to acknowledge and requite obligations, "I got such a fine supper of sprats from Joanie Keating; and now I want you to give me some medicine for her."

But if the doctor's little daughter thus enjoyed the society of the natives, young and old, of Eason's Hill, she also took her part in their devotions. In the evening, when the rosary was said in the cottage, she knelt down with her foster-parents, holding in her tiny hand the long beads with great depending crucifix, which, no doubt, seemed to her infantine eyes as much a part of her dear nurse as the many-frilled, gaily-bordered cap she wore. This certainly would seem to be anything rather than suitable training for a child of the Establishment. But Mary Rorke regarded her precious charge as no child of an Establishment, but as "a blessed little angel" belonging to the holy Roman Catholic Church. And for this opinion she had the best possible warrant: for had not she herself and Molly Mullane, a trusty servant of the family, long ago carried the darling infant to the priest of the parish, and got her properly baptised a Catholic? Little Mary learned to behave to perfection, and to add her lisping treble to the deeper tones of praise and supplication that went up from the cottage hearth. She could distinguish the prayers said on the large beads from those said on the small ones, and she knew well that the object of certain very fervent petitions addressed to the Lord of all, and to the Queen of Angels, was no other than her own tiny body and soul.

As a matter of course, the child went to Mass on Sundays with the entire population, great and small, of Eason's Hill. Sometimes she toddled on half hid in the folds of mammy's capacious cloak, and sometimes she was lifted in Daddy John's strong arms high over the heads of the crowd who trudged along, gossiping and bandying jokes on the way to their Sabbath devotions. Her first impressions of public worship were acquired in these visits to the bishop's chapel, as the church of the north parish was usually called. Large as the edifice was it did not suffice for the wants of the parish; the congregation filled up every corner, covered the outer steps, and overflowed into the yard, where the devout multitude knelt on the bare ground in front of the wide-open door, and listened for the rising of the crowd within at the first words of the Gospel, and for the tinkling of the altar-bell announcing the solemn moment of consecration. There

were the men on the one side with their hats laid beside them, and their hands clasped over their stout blackthorns; and there were the women on the other, with their well-worn beads and well-kissed crosses, bending their hooded heads to the very ground. Whatever might happen to the rest of the devout assembly, John Rorke, no doubt, took care, by dint of judicious "navigation" and persistent elbowing, to get his own Mary and her charge an inside place, whence they could have a view of the altar and a chance of hearing the sermon. The slow dispersing of the congregation after Mass, the cordial greeting of the neighbours, the walking home in companies, the gathering round the cottage doors or the cottage fires, according to the season, were all a part of the routine of the day, which, at any rate to the dwellers on Eason's Hill, was a day of innocent joy and holy rest.

The principal events in little Mary Aikenhead's life were her occasional visits to town, when she would make a number of new friends, and see many beautiful and strange sights in the streets and on the river. Sometimes on a Sunday, her father riding to Shandon, and meeting nurse and his little daughter on their road to Mass, would stop the carriage and call out, "Mary, come with me;" but the child, crying, "No, no; me won't go to church with you; me go to Mass with mammy," would cling all the closer to the big cloak; and the doctor, amused with the scene, would only laugh, and say, "Well, then, God bless you, child, go!" A walk on the Parade was one of the pleasures enjoyed in these visits to town, and one that gratified to the utmost nurse Rorke's pride in her foster-child. The ladies and gentlemen on the promenade always stopped to ask whose child she was, and to admire her chestnut hair and her strangely beautiful eyes. The admiration she attracted was so general, and so freely expressed, that the little beauty soon learned to understand the meaning of it; "Take me down the Parade again," she would say; "me know me am a pretty child."

So quick and intelligent was the child, that it was thought well to send her every day to a school not far from the cottage, where she might be placed under early and gentle discipline. The lessons were not felt as a trouble, but the parting from mammy was a grief daily renewed. However, real sorrow touched little Mary but once, and that was when nurse became sick unto death; and doctors came from the town to see her, and talked together, and shook their heads. One day it was feared that all would soon be over with Mary Rorke; and the neighbours remarked that when Dr. Aikenhead came with his friend, Dr. Bullen, to the cottage, he did not himself go in, but stayed outside crying. "He is that fond of the old woman, and that good-hearted," said the neighbours, "he cannot bear to see her dying." Happily, Mary Rorke recovered, and great was the joy in the Aikenhead household, and on Eason's Hill.

At length the time came when little Mary's removal to her city home could no longer be postponed. She was six years of age, and the very picture of health and happiness. If the transplanting from the hill-side necessitated a separation from the foster-parents, it would have been a scene of anguish and tears. But no; the cottage only was left on the hill. Nurse Rorke was installed in the household to continue her care of Miss Mary, and to take charge of other tiny members who had made their appearance in due course in the family; and honest John was assigned a post in the doctor's service on the understanding that he also was to help to rear the children. Dr. Aikenhead could afford to make this satisfactory arrangement. He was in high repute and full practice, and his desire was to share the blessings he enjoyed and to make all around him happy. His house, a large and commodious residence, in which also the chemist's establishment, trading under the title of Aikenhead and Dupont, was located, stood not far from the quaint old Exchange in that part of the Parade called—for some occult reason—"the Square." The situation was excellent for business, and advantageous in other respects also, being one of the airiest and driest in the city. Many of the citizens, and some of the doctors in large practice, too, by all accounts, held it for certain that the best and rarest drugs were to be had only at Aikenhead and Dupont's, which was, therefore, the place, by excellence, for having one's medical prescriptions made up. The house had a high social as well as a good business reputation, and many a kindly eye would glance at its bold front and many windows as the citizens of note passed by on their errands of business or pleasure: for Dr. Aikenhead's genially hospitable entertainments, especially his pleasant Sunday dinners, afforded much enjoyment, and left an agreeable flavour in the memory of the guests.

Cork was at this time, as it had been for some generations, a wealthy, stirring, important port, with a very original air about it and some original ways. A bird's-eye view would give one the impression of a cluster of houses huddled together in a picturesque swamp, and holding their ground for the bare life against a river, which, spreading out into wide arms, numerous lesser branches and stealthy canals, seemed to bend its course with no other view than to circumvent the buildings. Through many of the streets water flowed in the style of Rotterdam; draw-bridges crossed the canals; and trees, taking advantage of the never-failing moisture from below, and the hardly less copious moisture from above, sprang up high and green wherever they got leave to root themselves. The river banks were quayed in, and light tall-masted vessels conveyed to the warehouse doors, and into the heart of the town, the goods which had been carried as far as Passage by the merchantmen of France, Spain, and the Indies.

Out of this gay confusion of trees, bridges, ships, and the abodes of men, a considerable number of houses, and Shandon Church with its party-coloured steeple, appeared to have withdrawn to the high grounds on the north bank in search of a safe position. As if to make assurance doubly sure, these refugees, whenever it was practicable, climbed out of the way even of roads, and carried on communication with other streets by means of a stair-case. Citizens dwelling in the low grounds got accustomed to the peculiarities of the situation ; and when an unusual flood in the river, or a very high tide in conjunction with a very high wind sent the water up to the door-steps, their spirits nowise damped rose to the level of the occasion: they did their business in boats in the morning and rowed away to their dancing parties in the evening. Some of the more prudent merchants had the lower stories of their houses fitted with heavy doors to keep out the waters, or at any rate keep in the wares ; but, among the not very pleasant items of the morning's news would frequently be the announcement to the Cork traders that their merchandise, like their capital, was floating.

Travelling through the city was particularly dangerous after nightfall ; for there were few lamps in the streets, and no parapets to the quays ; and the bridges were kept, some of them, not in the best repair. Adventurous spirits scorning these dangers were likely to get a cooling in one or another of the channels of the pleasant waters of the river Lee, which stream, being no respecter of persons, was just as ready to wash away the Governor of Cork with his coach and horses, as to engulph any top-heavy townsman who might tumble over on his way home from a carouse.

Such being the general state of things, the Grand Parade, which, until shortly before Mary Aikenhead's birth, had gloried in its own particular canal and crazy bridges, was, now that the stream had been arched in and a fine roadway levelled over the rolling flood, looked upon as a model of engineering skill and civic enterprise, and the most desirable, healthy, and substantial site within the city boundaries. It had become the centre of every interesting and important movement. It was the ride, and it was the walk. The city guard exercised on its ample breadth of *terra firma*, and the pillory was set up in the midst. An equestrian statue of Georgé II. stood at the further end. The ships alone were excluded from their place of ancient resort, and could not approach nearer than the Mall, in the middle of which they still displayed their tapering masts and rags of canvas.

Mary Rorke and the little Aikenheads were soon one of the best known groups on the Parade. Margaret and Anne trotted along, tightly holding on to mammy's skirts ; little St. John, the baby, had a nursemaid devoted to his special service ; while Mary, as one more accustomed to general society, took a longer tether, and ran about inde-

pendently, receiving and returning the smiles and greetings of the passers-by. Possibly, with all its attractions, the promenade on the Parade was not so delightful as the excursions which nurse and her children would sometimes make into the busier parts of the town. What a treat it was to look in at the windows of the fine shops on the South Mall, to watch the boats coming up to the landing-places, and to see the men hauling up the bales and rolling the casks into the stores on the ground-floor of the merchants' fine houses! And what rare sport it was to look out on the river and hear how the "busy idlers," with their legs dangling over the quay wall, amused themselves carrying on a war of wit with the barge men going down with the tide and the fishermen landing their creels! On market-days alone the party kept carefully within hail of the paternal mansion: for what with droves of cattle blocking up the streets, and pigs running wildly under the horses' feet, and cars rattling furiously over the rugged pavement, and an excitable hilarious crowd fighting, and laughing, and clinching bargains at every street corner, it would have been as much as one's life was worth to venture with a troop of children within a mile of Patrick-street. And nurse had another good reason for keeping out of bustling thoroughfares, for Miss Mary, who, God bless her! was as wild as a deer, no sooner caught sight of Tommy the tin-man, or Biddy the hawker, or any of her old acquaintances, than away she flew, and you might just as well try to lay hold of the wind as expect to get sight of her again until she had shaken hands with all her cronies!

But to make up for this withdrawal from the busy haunts of men on market-days, the gay Sunday promenades might with perfect safety be frequented by nurse and the children. In the afternoon, Church service over, the flounced and feathered belles, the elderly gentlemen rigidly queued; the ruffled, powdered beaux with all the strut and swagger of so many heirs-apparent; and the young men whose shoe-ties, and locks *à la Brutus*, bespoke their advanced principles, and strong tendencies towards liberty, equality, and fraternity, were all to be seen congregated on the South Mall; while, later in the day, the picturesque Red House walk presented a still more animated scene: for thither resorted the town and country folk of lower degree to have their holiday gossip, quaff their pints of Cork porter, and group themselves just as Ostade or Teniers would have suggested at little tables under the spreading trees.

By-and-by, as Mary grew tall and got sense, she began to be less in the nursery and more with her mother in the parlour. The doctor, too, bethought him that it was high time that some of his family should be seen with him at church on a Sunday. It was not now so difficult to persuade the little girl that it would be a nice thing to ride to Shandon with her father. She readily listened to the proposal, and

quite enjoyed the idea of being thus promoted from the ranks of babyhood. When, therefore, the bells of Shandon rang over the city and the Lee, and the carriage drew up at the door, little Mary Aikenhead, having undergone a very particular dressing and kissing, would trip down stairs and graciously allow herself to be lifted into the carriage and deposited on the seat opposite to her father; where she would probably remain in dignified state until, nearing the old familiar district, she found herself in the midst of the dear Catholic crowd wending their way to the bishop's chapel. There were the grannies in their Sunday cloaks, with their faces nearly swallowed up in white borders; and there were the men in their gay waistcoats and ample cravats; and there were the barefooted youngsters as neat and nice as soap and water and clean clothes could make them. And as the heedless crowd in those days invariably walked in the very middle of the road, and the doctor's steady pair of horses were kept at a foot pace going up the hill, lest their hoofs should come in contact with the heels of the populace, our little lady had full opportunity of recognising her dear friends, and nodding and kissing hands to them, and calling them by their names from the carriage window. "And who, may I ask, is your friend Shawn?" said her father one day, noticing her delighted exclamations at the sight of the old man. "Oh! father," she replied, seizing the occasion of serving a friend, "Shawn is the man you must buy coals from the next time you want to get any!"

At Shandon, both within and without the church, everything was as different as could well be imagined from the bishop's chapel and its precincts. Around the edifice, and under the shade of the ancient trees which then beautified the burial-ground, a congregation of footmen and chairmen assembled. The former wore their laced hats and said no prayers; and if the latter were seen occasionally enveloped in wreaths of smoke, there certainly was no sacrificial odour about the incense. Military officers and civic dignitaries, the big wigs of the law and the top men of other professions, the mirrors of fashion of the fair sex, arrived in carriages and sedans, and took their places in comfortable capacious pews, wherein little ladies like Mary Aikenhead could sit secure without having their gay sashes disarranged or their blue shoes endangered by the pressure of a pious crowd. The service was as impressive as the best exertions of parson and clerk could make it; and the sermon, though sometimes high in tone, was on the other hand, so plain in terms that even a child could understand it. "Mammy, do you ever say any prayers for me now?" asked Mary one day, after she had been for some time attending service at Shandon. "To be sure I do, Miss Mary," was nurse's reply. "Well, mammy," continued her darling, "don't say any more prayers for me on the small beads; say them only on the large ones." "Indeed and indeed, them's the very prayers I'll say for you, and no other," persisted

Mrs. Rorke, who was not to be so easily persuaded that the grace of baptism was being preached out of her precious child.

In other matters, too, the little girl learned a great deal from observation and from the talk of the grown-up people who frequented her father's house. She soon had her eyes opened to the fact that Catholics were looked on as nobodies; that spiritually they were in the wrong, and socially they had no claim to respectability or consideration. One day, her grandmother, Mrs. Stacpole, offered her a pretty little rosary, remarking that it would help to adorn the doll's house, in which she took such pleasure. But Mary, after a moment's consideration, replied with the most dignified air imaginable, "No, thank you, grandmamma; all my dolls go to church except the kitchenmaid, and it is much too good for her!"

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## CHAPTER II.

MATERNAL ANCESTRY—NINETY-EIGHT—DR. AIKENHEAD DIES—MARY'S CONVERSION—CATHOLICITY IN CORK—GENERAL SOCIETY.

ITTLE Mary Aikenhead's classification of the professors of the fashionable creed, and the children of the ancient faith, no doubt afforded considerable amusement in the Stacpole household, since she was herself through them closely related to the best stock of the Anglo-Irish who had sacrificed all for their religion, and to native families of such very blue blood as the MacMahons and the O'Bryens. The Stacpoles were of Strongbonian origin, and held good properties in Limerick and Clare. When the religious question came to the front, one branch conformed to Protestantism, and saved their estates; while another branch kept the faith, and lost all else. From the latter descended Mary Aikenhead, on the maternal side. A page from the pedigree of the good old Roches, an important family in the South, originally English, but always Catholic, will show how the Stacpoles were connected with them and with other families of high repute in Munster.

John Roche, in 1688, married Anne, daughter of Philip Stacpole, of Mountcashel, Kilneen, and Kilconan, in Clare, who was son of James Stacpole, and Christina, daughter of Denis MacMahon of Clonagh, one of the most ancient families in the same county. Three of Philip Stacpole's brothers fell at the battle of Aughrim, fighting for James II. He had himself served as High Sheriff for the city of Limerick in 1688, when the Catholics were for a moment in the

ascendent; and he died in 1716, aged seventy years. The present Earl of Limerick enjoys some of the estates of this family, acquired by the marriage of his ancestor with a co-heiress of the Stacpoles. In a chapel of the old cathedral of Limerick is a vault in which are buried the Catholic Roches and Stacpoles; the family of Lord Limerick are the only others laid there. John Roche's son, Stephen, married, secondly, Sarah, daughter and co-heiress of John O'Bryen of Moyvaneen and Clonties, both in the county of Limerick, chief of the O'Bryens of Arran, lineal descendants of Brian Boruimhe.[1] This lady's brother, Thady O'Brien, entered the service of the Empress Maria Theresa, and, holding a commission under the Austrian commander, Loudon, fought at the battle of Künersdorff, in April, 1757, when Frederick the Great was defeated and took to flight; the king was for a moment arrested in his flight by O'Bryen, who seized and held the royal fugitive's horse until disabled by a pistol shot.[2] Another sister of this officer was married to Mary Aikenhead's great-grandfather Stacpole; and their son, Philip, her grandfather, married a Waterford lady, Mary Aylward by name. The Aylwards came to Ireland with King John, and held for generations a high position in Waterford. John Aylward was owner of the castle and estate of Fatlock when Cromwell sat down before the city. The Lord Protector entertained a kindly feeling towards the Catholic proprietor, and sent him a message to the effect that if he kept aloof and passed as a Protestant no harm should come to him. But the owner of Fatlock had the confessor's spirit in him: he would not dissemble his faith even for a day. His castle was destroyed, and no property remained to the Aylwards save what some of the family preserved by conforming to the new religion.

Such being the history of the Stacpoles and their alliances, it is easy to guess that, albeit sufferers still for the faith, they were disposed to hold their heads high in the company of the English by birth, and the English by blood, and the renegade Irish. Their claims were not only asserted by themselves, but were allowed even by those who affected to despise all professors of the Popish religion. No one looked down on the Stacpoles. Indeed, in more than one sense it would have been difficult to do so, for they were remarkably tall of stature, as also were their

[1] "In splendour of aristocratic descent, the O'Bryens can vie with any family in Britain. In 1542, the House of Inchiquin received the earl's coronet, in exchange for the hereditary kingship of Thomond. This far-descended house is one of the few native families of the aboriginal aristocracy to be found among our aristocracy. It authentically traces its descent to a line of princes, springing from Brian Borhoimhe. A history of the O'Bryens, including the branches settled on the Continent, would be most interesting and curious."—D. Owen Madden's "Revelations of Ireland," p. 292. (Original edition.)

[2] See "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, by an Octogenarian," vol. i., p. 74, where a German historian's account of the incident is given. The octogenarian, Mr. James Roche, was a nephew of the Austrian officer.

kinsmen in the county of Clare. An old gentleman of their acquaintance used to amuse himself, it was said, in calculating at an evening party how many feet of Stacpoles might be in the room. There were subjects of conversation which no one introduced except with caution in the company of the Roches and Stacpoles. One of these was the battle of Aughrim; so many of their relatives had fallen on that field, that they could not bear an allusion to the disastrous day. Like their countrymen in general, they held their kinsfolk, whether living or dead, in fond recollection; they lived much in the past, and talked of remote events as they might discuss the occurrences of yesterday. But for all that the Stacpoles were a lively and agreeable family. They were well educated, musical, and fond of society, and the atmosphere of their home was pleasant and good. Even children liked the house; and Mary Aikenhead, when she was about nine or ten years of age, began to take great delight in visiting at her grandmother's, where also lived two or three of her unmarried aunts; and her uncle Philip, who, now that the father of the family had followed to the better land a kindred host of various tribes, was the master of the house and the representative of that well-mixed branch of the race of Stacpole.

The piety of the family was worthy of their faith. They spent much money on the chapel of the south parish, which they partially rebuilt, and even ventured to give a prominent character to, in spite of the practice still enforced by precedent, if not by law, of having Catholic places of worship hid from the view of respectable people. In this chapel the Stacpoles had their pew, but this did not prevent their going to the other city chapels according as devotion might lead them. Mrs. Stacpole particularly liked the bishop's chapel, and was in the habit of attending evening devotions there. Mary, whose ambition it now was to be always in her grandmother's train, rapidly outgrew some of the prejudices she had acquired in her Sunday attendance at Shandon, gladly followed on to the holy place she had known so well in her infantine days, and soon learned to join with all her heart in the pious exercises of the very edifying congregation. She began to understand and to love the devotion of the rosary, and would thankfully have accepted a set of beads if anyone had thought of making her such a present. No one did so, however; no one appeared to mind whether she counted the Ave Marias on her fingers, or whether she joined at all in the prayers; but she set her wits to work and invented a substitute for the beads, though of a kind she hardly could venture to use in the chapel: she tied knots on her garter, and with the aid of this contrivance went through her favourite devotion in private. After some time her widowed aunt, Mrs. Gorman, who had been absent from Ireland, and had meant, it was supposed, to fix her residence abroad, returned to Cork and settled down permanently with her relatives. Mrs. Gorman was a fervent Catholic, genial and social

withal. The bishop, Dr. Moylan, was an intimate friend of hers, and she had many friends in the Presentation and Ursuline convents in Douglas-street, whom she constantly visited and spoke much of. A strong attachment grew up between Mrs. Gorman and her bright, thoughtful, handsome niece. One day, when her aunt was on her way to Mass, Mary said that she also would go. After Mass on that particular day there was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and Mary, who never before had been present at that sacred rite, was deeply moved; she asked her aunt for an explanation, and this having been given, she dwelt with the greatest interest on what she had heard and seen, and longed to know more about the Catholic religion. It was not difficult to acquire the information she sought, for Bishop Hay's works, the favourite reading of the pious in those days, were to be found in every Catholic household. Eagerly she took up the books, and attentively she read them. Nothing gratified her more than when her aunt spoke to her on religious subjects, and took her to the convents to see the nuns. By-and-by she made one excuse or another for absenting herself on Sundays from church service at Shandon, and began to go alone to the chapel to hear Mass in the mornings.

Mary Aikenhead's private expeditions to Mass were more easily managed in Cork than probably they could have been in other places and in a differently constituted society. A free-and-easy style characterised the life of all the citizens rich and poor, young and old. The children enjoyed almost as much liberty as the grown people. They went and came very much as they liked; made their way to school unattended by nurses or footmen; and were free of the city, except on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when they might run the risk of being tripped up by the swinish multitude or tossed over a bridge by the horned cattle. If they missed their way, some good Christian—a soldier perhaps, or a countryman—brought them to the paternal dwelling; and in the evening, when it was time to get the children to bed, the domestics, if they did not find the young people in the house went out to look for them in the neighbouring mansions. The children were perfectly safe; the town was not of such monstrous extent but that everyone knew the citizens' boys and girls, and none were so busy or so indifferent as not to take notice of the juvenile members of the community when they came in the way. Hot-house rearing was not approved of for these olive branches, and truth to say, they flourished in their open air existence Not but that the little lads and lasses had betimes their high-class entertainments, a mimic of the pastime of their elders. Once or twice, perhaps, in the year they were dressed out as little ladies and gentlemen: the girls an exquisite reduction of Gainsborough's pastoral maids, or Sir Joshua's dames of high estate; the boys a mirror of court costume, powdered and perriwigged, buckled and ruffled, with their embroidered waistcoats, silk

stockings, and silver snuff-boxes. Thus elaborately got up, the miniature madams and the lilliput sirs were conveyed in sedan chairs to the juvenile fancy balls, which afforded nearly as much amusement to the assembled fathers and mothers as to the youthful actors in the scene.

Mary's morning walks and early devotions did not, however, escape the notice of her aunt. Mrs. Gorman had become still more interested in the girl, whose vivacious, mirthful disposition was giving place as she grew older to a thoughtful mood, while her naturally quick intelligence sought food in serious studies and pursuits. In fact a struggle was going on in Mary's mind between the anti-Catholic prejudices she had too readily imbibed and her instinctive faith in the holy but despised religion. Young though she was she could fully understand that no obstacle should be allowed to interfere with the profession of the known truth, and that one should be ready at whatsoever cost to serve God in the way He appointed. But then, as usually happens in such circumstances, the difficulties in the way of open profession of the faith were exaggerated into formidable proportions. Mary's growing seriousness possibly attracted little general notice, for just at that time the natural gaiety of the Cork population was sadly clouded. The older folk were suffering from the terrors and the perils of the time; and even the young were affected by the gloom that enveloped the era of Ninety-eight. Many of the citizens of note were mourning the fate of relatives or friends implicated in the disturbances; while the poor, constantly taken up on suspicion, were subjected to the infamous tortures of the period—the whippings, the pitch-caps, the half hangings. From the country parts unfortunate rebels, or supposed rebels, were driven into the town, expeditiously tried, hanged without delay, and put out of sight, all save their heads, which in ghastly rows were spiked on the gaol.

Although no outbreak of rebellion took place in Cork, the United Irish Society had many influential adherents in the city. The Emmets were of Cork origin, and John and Henry Sheares were sons of the eminent banker of Patrick-street. Nightly meetings were held by the members of the society, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, assuming a safe disguise, ventured to visit the neighbourhood. On the other hand, the Sheriff of that day, Dr. Harding, used the cat-o'-nine tails with merciless severity on every poor wretch suspected of disaffection, or denounced as a rebel; and Chief Justice Carleton, who tried and sentenced the brothers Sheares, was their fellow-citizen and the intimate friend of their parents. In Cork, as elsewhere, the leaders of the insurrectionary movement were almost to a man Protestants and Presbyterians. The Catholics of position either lacked the spirit to risk the moderate advantages they had already obtained, by engaging in a hazardous undertaking, or shrank from incurring the accusation

of rebellion. Moreover, they were powerfully held in check by their bishop, Dr. Moylan, who in his private exhortations and his published pastorals anathematised the revolutionary spirit, and warned his flock to maintain a strictly loyal attitude in the midst of the perturbed conditions of the time. So much weight was attached to a pastoral letter issued by the bishop in December, 1796, that the Corporation of Cork presented Dr. Moylan with the freedom of the city in a silver box, "to perpetuate," as they said, "our grateful approbation of his pious exertions in promoting the peace and good order of his country at the moment of threatened invasion." [1]

Among the very last whom one would suppose likely to be affected by the enthusiasm of Ninety-eight was David Aikenhead. The son of a "settler," nursed in an ultra loyal atmosphere, and brought up in a circle wholly out of sympathy with the native population, he had begun life in accordance with the traditionary principles of the ascendency. In course of time, however, that love for the people and the country which had beguiled many another stranger in the land, seized also on him. He entered into the plans of the society, shared their hopes, and, there can be no doubt, was himself "united." Among his apprentices were several young men who afterwards became eminent and prosperous in their profession. Some, at any rate, of these young men were far from sharing the doctor's political opinions, but they knew his secret, and kept it. One Sunday afternoon as he was about to sit down to table with a number of guests, the butler came to tell him that a gentleman, a Quaker, asked to see him. The doctor desired the Friend to be shown up, and on the visitor's introduction invited him to partake of dinner. None of the company remembered to have ever seen the new guest, a man of frank, gentlemanly address, middle height, and pleasant countenance, lighted up by a pair of eyes singularly dark and lustrous. The party were not long in conviviality when the house was surrounded by troops with the Sheriff at their head. A few hurried words from the doctor to the Friend, and the latter disappeared. Immediately a rigorous search for papers was made in every part of the dwelling. No opposition was given to the Sheriff and his men; and the apprentices, at least, appeared to regard the scene as particularly amusing: for they took the opportunity of making a great racket in the shop, throwing orange peels at one another—carefully, however, keeping their backs to certain drawers in which papers of an explosive kind were concealed. The young men's fun might not, perhaps, have proved so successful a game as they expected, only for the sudden departure of the Sheriff and his troops, who, having received some in-

[1] "The Council Book of the Corporation of the City of Cork." Edited by Richard Caulfield, LL.D., p. 1115.

formation from without, gave up the search at Aikenhead and Dupont's, and took with all expedition the road to Blackrock.

Meanwhile, a gentleman walking on the Blackrock road was accosted by a stranger in the garb of a Quaker who asked him was there a ferry at that part of the river, adding that he had particular and urgent business at the opposite or Glanmire side. There was no ferry, the gentleman answered; and the Quaker pursued his way, until he came to the house of a friend opposite the present Ursuline convent, to which he had been directed by his late entertainer. There, after some parley with a fisherman—the price being of small importance provided the river was speedily crossed in the boat that lay alongside the bank—the oars were manned, and the craft steered to the Glanmire shore. From the middle of the stream the fugitive could descry the Sheriff and his military escort arriving at the spot whence he had embarked. The pursuers thus foiled, and doubting not that the boat pulling with haste across the river had on board the object of their search, returned with all expedition to Cork, crossed the bridge, and hurried back to Glanmire. But they were foiled once more. The fugitive—Lord Edward Fitzgerald—had reached Sunday's Well, and was safely housed at Jemmapes, a cottage in a clump of trees, well known to the United Irishmen, with whom it was a favourite rendezvous.

Dr. Aikenhead, who was now about fifty years of age, and had secured a good provision for his family, resolved to give up business. In 1798, the establishment of Aikenhead and Dupont passed into other hands, and Mary's father found himself free to form another plan of life from that which he had followed with credit and success. What these ultimate plans were we cannot say. All we know is that he was left but a very few years to enjoy his life of greater ease. Towards the close of the year 1801 he became seriously ill, and by Christmastide there was no hope of his recovery. He was well aware of the dangerous nature of his malady, and he received the ministrations of a Protestant clergyman, who prayed with him and prepared him, in the way prescribed by the Church of England, for his approaching dissolution. But his mind was not at ease. Some word, which had escaped Mrs. Aikenhead in her anguish at the approach of "an eternal separation," impressed him with the reality and the supreme claims of the faith to which his wife had steadfastly adhered. He asked to have a Catholic priest brought to him, and after some serious conversation his doubts vanished and he expressed his desire to be received into the Catholic and Apostolic Church. He made his profession of faith, and on the 28th of December, breathed his last amidst the tears and prayers of his family: the bishop and faithful Mary Rorke standing with the sorrowing group by his bedside.

This happy death was a source of great consolation to his widow,

who held the tender husband and the good father in affectionate and faithful remembrance as long as she lived. It had, no doubt, its effect also on Mary, steadying her wavering mind, inclining her to read the lessons of life's sorrows rather than to court the vanities of empty prejudice and idle opinion, and leading her to the conclusion that, since everything was uncertain in this world save death and tribulation, it was better to cast minor considerations to the winds, and follow the lead of conscience, cost what it might. At length, having heard Dr. Florence MacCarthy preach a sermon on the parable of Dives and Lazarus, she was so moved by the consideration of the rich man's doom and the poor man's sufferings and recompense, that she made up her mind to cast in her lot with the lowly and the despised whom Jesus loved and called to share his heavenly kingdom. This one thought now possessed her. Mrs. Gorman, who always watched her with affectionate interest, saw that a crisis was at hand. Calling Mary aside, she made her feel how much in sympathy she was with the struggling soul, and gained her fullest confidence. "I shall never be happy until I am a Catholic," cried Mary. "And why not become one at once?" was her aunt's reply. With the aid of this good friend Mary went through a course of careful instruction and devout preparation, and on the 6th of June, 1802, she was received into the Catholic Church. She made her first Communion of the 29th of the same month, the festival of SS. Peter and Paul; and on the 2nd of July, the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, she received the Sacrament of Confirmation from the beloved and venerated Dr. Moylan.

Mary Aikenhead was midway in her sixteenth year when these happy events took place. The dates were marked as red-letter days in her calendar, and each anniversary as it occurred was celebrated with gratitude and joy. She no sooner professed the faith than she became imbued with the essential spirit of Catholic life. She gloried in belonging to the nation of "Irish Papists," still politically and socially banned, whose heroic endurance and matchless fidelity inspired the first noble enthusiasm of her ardent, steadfast nature.

From the beginning of the religious troubles up to the partial relaxation of the penal laws, the Catholics of Cork, as gallantly as any in the land, held on to the ancient faith: braving death and outlawry in the worst days, and enduring in less severe times, with a high spirit and a light heart, the long course of irritating oppression to which they were subjected by the ascendent party. When it was sought to introduce the reformed doctrines into Ireland, the citizens of Cork, partly descended from the Danish settlers and partly from the old English colonists, stoutly refused to admit any change. Strictly loyal they were, and for generations they had maintained the English interest against the circumjacent Irish, powerful through numbers and

audacity. But when loyalty to the English Sovereign meant a desertion of higher duty, the citizens of Cork knew how to choose. Queen Elizabeth showed great anxiety to convert them to her religious views and induce them to acknowledge the jurisdiction of a bishop of her own choosing, whom she appointed as the pastor of their souls. Her Majesty's nominee, Dr. Lyon, who, besides being a Queen's bishop was a member of the Commission for peopling Munster with new English, did his utmost to ruin and exterminate the old inhabitants, and prevent the exercise of the Catholic religion; but he was driven to despair by the obduracy of his contumelious flock. He wrote affecting letters on the subject of his difficulties to Lord Hundson, her Majesty's near relative and Lord Chamberlain. In his quaint epistles he describes the people as "ignorant of God and his truth," and led by "false teachers who draw them away from their obedience to her Majesty's goodly lawes." They even go so far, he has to admit, as with "palpable and damnable blyndnesse to obey her Majesty's capital enemy, that Antichrist of Rome."[1] Point blank they refuse to resort to divine service; not even women and children will hearken to sermons; and if any will have his child baptised hardly can gossips be found "but one poor man, that is, the clerk, his wife, and a poor minister, these being the common gossips." Elizabeth's bishop can, of course, prevent the Papists worshipping in public, but "in the city of Corck all is done in private houses by massing priests," who reside within the walls and are "maintayned and kept dayly by the aldermen and merchants," and conveyed by them out of town when they "goe to say their masses in the countrey abroad." The citizens and corporations are, in truth, the reverse of what could be desired: they "grow wealthy, proud, stubborn, obstinate, disobedient, and rebellious." And what is worse than all and hardly to be credited, the Queen's clergy in the country parts "forsake their benefices to become massing priests, because they are so well entreated, and soe much

[1] This reminds one of the account of the Reformation given in the "Annals of the Four Masters" A.D. 1537. "A new heresy and error arose in England, through pride, vainglory, avarice, sensuality, and many strange speculations, so that the people of England went into opposition to the Pope and to Rome. They at the same time embraced extraordinary opinions, and the old law of Moses in imitation of the Jewish people, and nominated the king during his own reign chief head of the Church of God. New laws and statutes were enacted by the king and council, according to their own will; they ruined the religious orders who were entitled to hold worldly possessions, namely, Monks, Canons, Nuns, Friars of the Cross, and the four poor orders, viz., the Minor Order, the Preachers, Carmelites, and Augustinians; and the possessions and livings of all those were taken up for the king. They demolished the monasteries, sold their roofs and bells, and there was not a monastery, from Arran of the Saints to the Iccian Sea, that was not shattered and completely destroyed, except only a few in Ireland, which the English did not find out or discover. . . . . They made archbishops and sub-bishops for themselves, and though great was the persecution of the Roman emperors against the Church, it is doubtful if so great as this ever came from Rome; so that it would be impossible to relate or give a description of it, unless told by a person who saw it."—Connellan's translation.

made of among the people." These renegade clerics are as ill-mannered as they are ill-advised. "The best name they can give unto the divine service appointed by her Majesty in the Church of England or Ireland is the Divell's service, and the professors thereof Divels, and when they meet one of the profession, they will cross themselves after the Popish manner, and any that company with us, or receive any living of me or the like, being appointed by her Majesty, they excommunicate him or them, and will not suffer them to come in their company."[1]

No less incorrigible proved the next generation. In the reign of James I., Sarsfield, Mayor of Cork, was imprisoned and fined five hundred pounds for going to Mass. Strafford, in his turn, tried to bring the citizens to reason, but in vain; all he could do was to plunder them. They subscribed liberally—Alderman Dominick Roche giving as his contribution two thousand pounds—to help the king to carry on the war with his parliament; but the freedom of worship promised to the loyal Catholics in consideration of their subsidy, was, it is needless to say, never granted. Having joined the confederates during the great rebellion, the inhabitants of Cork were overwhelmed in the subsequent general disaster. All the civic officers, together with the principal citizens, were turned out of their homes into the wasted country districts. After a time many of them got back to the city, but only to suffer worse things when Cromwell came to spend the Christmas of 1649 in "the beautiful cittie," converted the church bells into battering cannon, carried on his operations against the neighbouring strongholds, and matured his plans for annihilating at one fell swoop the aboriginal inhabitants and the old Catholic settlers of Ireland.

When the sword had done its bloody work, the Oath of Abjuration was employed to accomplish the reformation of the survivors. It was thought that wholesale conversions might be effected like wholesale massacres: but this was a miscalculation. A strange scene occurred one day in the year 1658, when the people of the surrounding country, having been ordered to repair to the city for the purpose of having the oath administered to them by a bench of magistrates sitting in Christ's Church, between five and six thousand Catholics entered the gates. "All were arranged in processional order," says a cotemporary narrative, "that the oath might be more easily administered to each of them. In the foremost ranks was a young man who entered the church with a light step, and whose looks beamed with joy. The clerk received immediate orders to administer to him for the first the oath, for the magistrates saw in his joyous counte-

[1] See the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, vol. vii., in which Bishop Lyon's extraordinary letters are given in full, printed for the first time from the originals in the State Paper Office, London.

nance a readiness, as they imagined, to assent to their desires. The young man requested that the oath should be translated into Irish, for he feared lest some of those around him, not understanding the English language, might inadvertently take the oath; a crier at once read it aloud in Irish, so that all within the church might hear. 'And what is the penalty,' he then asked, 'for those who refuse the oath?' 'The loss of two-thirds of their goods,' was the magistrate's reply. 'Well, then,' added he, smiling, 'all that I possess is six pounds, take four of them; with the two that remain, and the blessing of God, myself and my family will subsist. I reject your oath.' An aged husbandman that stood by his side, filled with admiration, cried out aloud, 'Brave fellow, reject the oath.' The words were caught up from rank to rank, till the church and the street without rang with the echo, '*reject the oath, the impious oath.*' For half an hour these words and the exclamation, 'Oh, God, look down upon us! 'Oh, Mary, Mother of God, assist us!' could alone be heard. The magistrates, as though a thunder-clap had rent the heavens, were struck mute with terror; then rising from their seats, they commanded the assembled multitude to disperse, and every one of them, under pain of death, to depart from the city within an hour."[1]

During the reign of Charles II. the persecution continued. In order of time, King James arrived to take up his residence in the Dominican Convent of St. Mary of the Isle, while his fleet cast anchor in the harbour, and the troops of Louis XIV. quartered themselves in the town. James disappeared, not without having treated with ungenerous severity the Protestant intruders. William's fleet sailed in, and Cork surrendered to Churchill and the Duke of Wurtemberg. A few years of fitful hopes and blank despair succeeded, and Sarsfield, with his gallant soldiers, sped from these shores away to France. Then followed the penal regime, closing against the Catholics of the towns, every road to honour and independence, and filching from the country gentry the scant remnant of property which had previously escaped confiscation. It has been said that but three Catholic families in the county of Cork retained their estates, and these only by the protection of their Protestant friends; while the old city families of note had disappeared from every post of consideration or emolument, and were to be found—such of them as had made their way back after having being turned out of the lines of fortifications—located in obscure streets, engaged in petty trades, and confounded once and for ever in suffering and disgrace with the natives of Gaelic origin.

But their ancient spirit was not extinguished. If the fathers were great in their endurance, the sons, as time went on, proved themselves no less admirable in their prudence, their enterprise, and their prompt-

[1] Dr. Moran's "Memoirs of Archbishop Plunket."—(Introduction.)

ness in seizing every occasion to loosen the bonds that galled the Catholic body and retarded their own advancement. Entries in the Council Book of the Corporation of Cork enable us to understand what were the difficulties which the Catholics during the eighteenth century had to contend against. The new Protestant colony having been delivered, as they said, from "the tyranny of their malicious, implacable enemies the papists," were, nevertheless, in constant apprehension of having their monoplies invaded by a resurgent Catholic body. In 1700, the Council resolved to extinguish the "Irish shopkeepers," by seizing all goods sold by retail by such as were not freemen, and disposing of them to the use of the Corporation. Four years later it was considered necessary to petition Parliament, "setting forth the grievance the English lie under by the encroachments of the Irish into their respective trades, and also setting forth the great numbers of Irish flocking into the city to the great damage and danger of the Protestant inhabitants." Notwithstanding all this, the unfortunate Irish held their ground, and, in 1707, certain "Popish merchants," who had abatement of their petty dues, were ordered to be "summoned before the mayor and tendered the oath of abjuration, which, if they refuse to take, from thenceforth the privilege granted them be taken off." Under the apprehension, no doubt, that the Papists might arise in the night to proclaim the Pretender, the mayor gave directions, in 1715, that any Papist found out of his house at or after ten o'clock at night should be secured by the guard.[1] Interested agitators and silly pamphleteers outside the Council-room, blew the coals from time to time, and strove to get up an *auto da fe* at the expense of the Papists, who, in spite of all that was done to impoverish and crush them,[2] had attained to a condition of moderate comfort, fast progressing into opulence. Complaints were made of "their impudence, running openly into every branch of trade, talking big upon change, and importing the cargoes of priests who swarm about the city."[3]

But, truth to say, the Protestant citizens, though they jealously clutched their monopolies, and occasionally made anti-Popish demonstrations, were too good-natured, as individuals, to carry on a persistent course of petty personal persecutions.[4] As time went on they shut

[1] See "The Council Book of the Corporation of Cork," edited by Richard Caulfield, LL.D.

[2] The Catholics were obliged to pay *quarterage* for permission to follow their trade or calling.

[3] Quoted from a "rabid pamphleteer of the time," in a "Lecture on the History of Cork," by J. G. MacCarthy, M.P.

[4] There was, in fact, room for all who had industry or enterprise. The trade of Cork was very great in the last century. About 80,000 beeves, and porkers too numerous to count, were slaughtered annually for exportation, and a quantity of fish was salted. The merchant service and the English navy were provisioned to a great extent by the Cork houses, and the French, in time of peace, were supplied with an inferior kind of salted beef.

their eyes to many things; while the Catholics, accepting connivance as a boon, made the best of their opportunities. They never were ashamed of their religion; but with an approach to mirthful unconcern they not ungracefully wore the badges of degradation. Before the middle of the last century there were public Mass-houses in the city; and when Dr. Campbell visited Cork, in 1777, he found the Catholics had seven parish chapels and many houses of monks, "in all of which they have," he says, "a succession of services on Sundays and holidays, from early in the morning till late at night, for the accommodation of their numerous votaries." Before the door of one of their spacious Mass-houses the traveller saw several elegant carriages standing on a Sunday morning, while a prodigious crowd of people filled the street, forming as motley an assemblage of human creatures as ever he had seen in his life. He gives as an instance of Popish audacity that when, on bidding a townsman, whom he had picked up as a guide, to conduct him to the bishop's house, the fellow impertinently asked him "which bishop?" As for the country people, they were in no degree behind the citizens in their unblushing profession of Romanism and their open practice of time-honoured devotions. On patron days they made pilgrimages to the ruined shrines of local saints; the stones round the old crosses were worn with their knees; they visited the holy wells, telling their beads, and taking no heed of the sneers of the self-righteous or the remonstrances of the worldly-wise. Crowds poured into the towns on Sundays, and filled the chapel and the chapel-yard, within, perhaps, a stone's throw of the Protestant church, in which the minister preached to a congregation composed of his family and domestics.

With the era of the Volunteers a day of brighter hope seemed to dawn for the Catholics of Ireland, and a spirit was spread abroad which not all the illiberality of Henry Flood nor all the bigotry of Lord Charlemont could stamp out. The Volunteers of the first levies, Protestants to a man, soon awoke to a nobler ambition than that of vindicating the rights of a party. They admitted Catholics to their ranks, and were anxious to emancipate them. Cork was not insensible to this generous impulse. The corporation, which had hitherto displayed so illiberal a spirit, relaxed its sectarian rigour, in so far at least as to inscribe with marks of honour on the roll of its free

Tallow was exported to Bristol and Holland; hides were shipped to the latter state. Hearts and skirts were salted and shipped in bulk for Scotland. The round gut went to Venice for the skins of Bologna sausages, the bladders were sent to England, and the shank bones to Holland—a ship laden with the latter looking like a charnel-house. Great quantities of camlets were exported to Portugal: an illicit trade, but butter firkins and other kinds of packages eluded the vigilance of the Custom-house officers. It was given as an instance of the wealth of the Cork merchants that although they lost £70,000 by the earthquake of Lisbon, not one of them broke.—See Lord Chief Justice Willis' "Account of Cork," 1857-62. Transcribed from a MS. in the British Museum by Richard Caulfield, LL.D.

citizens such openly avowed friends of the Catholic cause as Edmund Burke and John Philpot Curran. The Catholics now began to take heart, and ventured to show, by the more dignified attitude they assumed, that they did not acquiesce in the policy that held them in degradation. An incident, which occurred in the summer of 1790, on the occasion of the visit of the Viceroy, Lord Westmoreland, to the south of Ireland, showed that the Catholics were beginning to indulge a certain liberty of speech, or perhaps we should say, to exercise the right of being silent when they would. On the arrival of the Lord Lieutenant in Cork, "it was intimated to the Catholics there that an expression of their loyalty would be acceptable. Accordingly an address of that nature was prepared, which, however, concluded with a hope that their loyalty would entitle them to some relaxation of the present code. Before its being formally presented, it was submitted to his Excellency, and was returned to them to strike out the clause which expressed the hope. With a feeling rather natural to men not perfectly broken down by oppression, they refused to strike it out, and declined presenting any address at all."[1] Indeed, had it not been for the early and fatal intrusion of the Orange faction on the scene, the growing courage of the Catholics and the increasing liberality of the Protestants would probably have resulted in establishing at Cork something like a state of thorough good citizenship.

But though the Protestant minority, with their jealously-guarded privileges, and the Catholic majority, with their vexatious disabilities, continued to form two distinct classes which only now and then entered into really cordial relations, society in Cork was, nevertheless, pervaded with a general tone distinguishing it favourably from that of other places. As a whole, the citizens were a highly intelligent, humorous race, who understood the art of enjoying life as well as the art of enriching themselves by commercial enterprise. They were characterised by "universal politeness and urbanity from the highest to the lowest," and by a certain native wit which overflowed the market-places, rippled the surface of official life, and brightened the existence of high and low. Conversation was anything but dull. Men and women were expected to have always the ready word on the tongue, and to contribute something to the general stock whether in the shape of fun or information. Humour was not always confined to words; it sometimes broke out into action. Observant foreigners remarked that a great number of characters (*gens à caractère*) were to be met with in Cork.[2]

[1] MacNevin's "Pieces of Irish History." (First Essay.)

[2] Et y a ici grand nombre de personnes qu'on appelle gens à caractère, et qui tous ont des fantaisies fort singulieres; l'un ne se met jamais à table, erainte d'être suffoqué par l'odeur des viandes et mange tout seul dans le vestibule: l'autre dépense son revenu en animaux favoris, où *pets* comme ou les appelle: un troisieme (assez bon enfant chez lui)

Music the citizens cultivated in good earnest, following, though at a humble distance, the example set them in his day by Bishop Berkeley, who had an eminent Italian master domesticated in his palace at Cloyne, and used to call up his children at cock-crow to practise on different instruments, and go through their singing lessons in the golden dawn. Possibly the minute philosopher may have helped in the same way to encourage the taste for gardening which also prevailed; though certainly the amateur florists did not adopt all his theories, or place, as he would be sure to do, a ball of the incomparable tar at the root of delicate shrubs. Anyhow, the merchants' residences, situated on the slope of wooded hills washed by the sparkling river, and looking out on a landscape of rare sylvan beauty, were rendered still more picturesque by their setting of tasteful shrubberies and brilliant parterres, which expanded and glowed under the gently stimulating influence of an atmosphere permeated with heat and charged with moisture.

Boating was another favourite recreation of the citizens. The rich merchants had yachts, or rather hookers, of their own—swift, safe, commodious vessels; the less opulent hired a sail for the day's pleasure; while the poorer class followed in the wake of their betters, and on holiday occasions rowed away to Passage in their own market wherry, or dropped down to Cove in a neighbour's fishing smack. One way or another the Corkonians were constantly afloat; and the river between the city and the sea was a lively scene on summer evenings, and on the frequent occasions when public galas and private entertainments assumed the character of a water party.

Theatrical amusements were in great vogue too. The Cork people had no mean opinion of their own critical judgment; nor were the Garricks, and Kembles, and Siddonses in the smallest degree indifferent to their verdict. From the highest to the lowest the actors were particularly careful not to assume any airs while they were in Cork, nor to play any tricks on their audience. Performances, amusing or tragical as the case might be, took place from time to time on other stages besides the histrionic boards. The Court-house, for instance, was a place of singular attraction during the assizes: for the Cork circuit was first Curran's and then O'Connell's circuit; and the bar all through was brilliant in the extreme. In the speeches of counsel the Irish brogue was heard in perfection. Many of the most eminent men at the bar affected the brogue if they had not the gift by nature: "it made them favourites," says an observer, "and sent their sarcasms

après vous avoir enchanté par une belle voix et une musique charmante, finira par vous *boxer*. Il y en a un qui court les rues au grand gallop avec un bonnet rouge et entre dans les boutiques à cheval, quand il a besoin de quelque chose, etc. etc.—"Promenade d'un Français dans l'Irlande, p. 97. (Dublin Edition. 1797.)

with more force in irony."[1] More questionable proceedings were those peculiar to a contested election—an affair which sometimes lasted two or three weeks. Each candidate for parliamentary honours strove to secure the services of eloquent barristers, but was still more anxious to have the professional aid of "fighting counsel," that is to say, of good shots, who were quite as ready to send a challenge as to make a speech. These gentlemen got "fighting price," a much higher figure than "talking price." One of them is said to have fought fourteen duels at a contested election in Cork.[2]

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## CHAPTER III.

### MARY AIKENHEAD'S FRIENDS—HER DAILY LIFE—RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

DR. AIKENHEAD'S worldly affairs had prospered so well that he was able at his death to leave his family sufficiently provided for. The widow and her four children had their home in Rutland-street, a quarter of the city then inhabited by people of their station; they enjoyed all the comforts and possessed many of the luxuries of life; there was little change in their style of living, and the carriage they had been accustomed to, and which comparatively few families in those days could keep, had not to be laid down. Mrs. Aikenhead, a gentle, amiable woman, who had made the domestic life one round of peace, felt the loss of a good manager, as well as of an affectionate husband, when the partner of her life was taken from her. The income of the family was derived from house property and other sources which required constant looking after, and Mrs. Aikenhead, who did not enjoy good health, was hardly able for a kind of work that was new to her and fatiguing. But her eldest daughter developed a remarkable capacity for business details, helped her to manage the property and bring up the children, and, after two or three years, was virtually the head and mainstay of the family. Mary had got a good education without losing the comforts, the joys, or the inestimable unstudied training of home life. She had been sent to a day-school when a little over ten years of age that she might learn to speak French. Good schools abounded in Cork at that time, and French was thoroughly taught in them by competent professors. Not to "speak French like a native," would have been considered disgraceful in Cork society, where one met at every turn the descendants of Huguenot settlers,

[1] O'Keefe's "Recollections," vol. i., p. 45.
[2] "Ireland and Her Agitators," p. 12.

who cultivated the tongue of their grandfathers, and had the French Service read every Sunday in a church of their own; Catholic priests, to whom French was as familiar as English; and gentlemen, who, having been educated abroad, took pains not to forget the language of the civilised world.

Fond of reading, taking delight in all that was refined and elegant, intellectually quick, and wide in sympathy, Mary was well prepared to learn from observation of the world around her, and to profit by the opportunities she enjoyed in social intercourse. Her education did not end with her school-days; she learned something worth knowing every day of her life; and by the time she was eighteen or twenty years of age, she was a very interesting girl, and a most agreeable companion. Certainly there is this to be said, that she enjoyed advantages which all of her age and rank do not possess, for she had that early share in the responsibilities of life and that rational liberty of action which are essential to the moral and intellectual growth of every human creature. Her innocent gaiety of disposition made her enter heartily into whatever was humorous and mirthful, and her love of nature provided joys for her in sunset glories and the loveliness of woodland scenes.

After Dr. Aikenhead's death there was no difficulty about sending Anne and Margaret to the Ursuline Convent to be educated with the Hennessys, whose mother was a sister of Mrs. Aikenhead. The children of the two families grew up together, and a pleasant, hopeful group they formed. The Stacpole household was still tolerably numerous and held well together, although Mrs. Stacpole, to the surprise of her friends, contracted a second marriage late in life, and became the wife of Mr. Bernard of Palass Anne, a member of Lord Bandon's family. Mary's aunts were very fond of society, and so was their brother Philip: the latter was a captain of the grenadier company of the Cork Legion; he never married, but lived an easy-going sort of life, dressing and comporting himself very much in the fashion of a Frenchman of the old school, and qualifying himself in sundry ways to be classed with the *gens à caractère* of the town. But he was a good fellow withal, and to the last was Mary's "dear uncle Philip." The outer world of extensive family connexions and troops of acquaintances came into close relationship with the Rutland-street household, who, truth to say, led neither a dull nor a lonely life.

Among her father's relatives and friends Mary met good Protestant society, and in the company of her mother's relations she became acquainted with the best in Catholic circles. She felt more at home among the latter, as was natural; but she also could not help thinking that, all things considered, the Catholic society was the most agreeable. Nor did her judgment mislead her in this. Undoubtedly there were compensations in the position of the Catholics, well kept

down though they were. Thrown back on the domestic hearth by their exclusion from the clubs, the men brought home each day's treasure trove of new ideas, happy strokes of wit, and foreign news, to enliven their own dinner-table, and make good cheer when friends dropped in for a social talk. The style of living in those days suited a condition of society which combined the comfort of the family circle with the intellectual vivacity of reunions composed of men well educated and highly intelligent, and of women, who, being accustomed to good conversation, were quite at their ease and knew how to acquit themselves creditably.

Genial hospitality was the rule. Even the moderately well-to-do kept a good table, as indeed was not difficult, considering that the markets were stocked with fish, flesh, and fowl of the best quality; vegetables and fruit, as excellent as Italy itself could show; bread, superlatively good; and butter, fresh from sweet inland pastures. Moreover, the city cellars were well supplied with incomparable port, choice Bordeaux, and golden Spanish wines, which the merchants' correspondents, their own exiled kindred, sent home from foreign stores. Thus, when the master of the house arrived at dinner-time in company with two or three merchant friends who had just landed with a cargo from distant lands, or a country cousin came up from the interior to sell a drove of fat oxen destined to provision British soldiers in the Peninsula, disarrangement of the domestic economy was not the consequence. The guests were made welcome and excellently entertained; and they brought something agreeable with them, too—a breath of fragrance from southern shores, a whiff of mountain air from Kerry, some new element to heighten the zest of a conversation which seldom lacked the dash of Irish humour and the pungency of attic salt. Parties to which guests were regularly invited, were hardly more than a pleasant widening of the family circle, or rather a lengthening of the well-spread board. But the plenty which prevailed was not merely a rude profusion; the viands were carefully cooked and served with taste, and it was not difficult to perceive that the host had lived for some time abroad and liked to keep up certain excellent foreign customs.

Nearly all the Catholic heads of families, in Mary Aikenhead's youth, had been educated in France, and several of the younger men had got more or less schooling on the Continent before the Revolution broke out and forced the Irish students to return to their native island. Many of the merchants having relatives on the Continent had seen foreign life in their company other than student-wise, and still kept up friendly intercourse with them. Not a few of humbler standing had also their foreign connexions, and though living in poor circumstances received letters and presents from relatives in high stations abroad. Oftentimes the souvenirs sent home were a touching evi-

dence of the exiles' undying recollection of the old land, and faithful love of kindred; yet withal provoked a smile, so ludicrously out of character with the condition of the recipients were the exquisite pieces of art workmanship and the articles of court costume transmitted to the humble inheritors of once renowned names.

Among those who had brought a great deal of pleasant life into the Aikenhead and Stacpole circles was George Hennessy, the husband of Mary's aunt, Teresa; he was a handsome, agreeable man, a member of "the ancient and honourable house of Hennessy of Ballymacmoy, in the county of Cork."[1] One of his immediate ancestors, Richard Hennessy, married a cousin of Edmund Burke, and was an officer in the Irish Brigade in the era of Dettingen and Fontenoy. That gentleman's son, James, was also for a time in the Brigade, but subsequently, with his father and another partner, established a distillery at Cognac. Mary's uncle, who was a wine merchant in Cork, kept up a communication with his relations in France, and often went on a voyage to Spain about his mercantile affairs. From his journeys he used to return with a goodly store of news, including pleasant talk of travelling adventures, and sadder tales of shipwreck and disaster. He was greatly liked, and his house was the scene of many an agreeable entertainment: as indeed were the houses of the wine merchants generally, for the most aristocratic society in the county willingly accepted invitations to a table at which wine went round of a vintage which could not be had elsewhere for love or money. George Hennessy, like his relatives, knew something of a soldier's life; he was captain of a yeomanry corps, and was often exposed to great hardship in the discharge of duties which devolved on the local troops during the disturbed state of the country after 1798. On one of these expeditions he caught a fever, of which he died;[2] his widow, who was a widow indeed, all her life long, was left with two children, the little cousins already spoken of.

Undoubtedly the best representative of the literary class among Mary Aikenhead's friends was Mr. James Roche, a member of the good old family already spoken of—"the plentiful Roches who do not wrong."[3] He was connected with the Stacpoles through his grand-

[1] Mr. Peter Burke's "Public and Domestic Life of Edmund Burke," ch. v.

[2] O'Connell thus alludes to the death of George Hennessy, in a conversation with Mr. O'Neill Daunt.—"It was a dreadfully wet evening, when Grady and I crossed these mountains. My cousin, Captain Hennessy, commanded the company who had on that day escorted the judges from Cork to Fermoy. On reaching Fermoy he was thoroughly drenched; he pulled out the breast of his shirt and wrung a pint of water from it on the floor. I implored him to change his dress. 'Oh, no,' he answered, 'I shan't mind it;' and in that state he sat down to dinner. The result of course was a fever, and in three or four days he was a corpse. How people will fling their lives away!"—"Personal Recollections," &c., vol. ii., p. 55.

[3] Ancient Irish Poem.

mother, Sarah O'Bryen, who was sister, as we have said, to Mary Aikenhead's great grandmother, and the friendliest relations were kept up between the families. Mr. Roche came up to his young friend's ideal of a man of taste and learning—a Catholic gentleman living in the world. Although a banker, and largely engaged in business, he found time for extensive reading and serious study. His residence, situated on the Glanmire hill and overlooking the winding river and its picturesque banks, was the very picture of a seat of studious repose; the library windows commanded a lovely view; its shelves were filled with good editions of the classic writers, and the best English and foreign literature; and a greater treat could hardly be enjoyed than in spending an hour among its treasures, listening to their owner's running commentaries on men and books. His conversation was particularly interesting from his knowledge of French affairs, and his acquaintance in earlier days with a variety of remarkable characters. Educated at the Catholic College of Saintes, he settled for a time in France; he knew many of the officers of the Irish Brigade, was intimate with Count MacCarthy, at Toulouse, and acquainted with the Girondists at Bordeaux; Tallien and his wife he often met in society. In Paris, during the Revolution, he was a sadly unwilling spectator of the tragic scenes of 1793, and did not escape the dangers of the time; he was arrested and detained in prison until the death of Robespierre gave the signal for the release of many like himself confined on suspicion. Mr. Roche's foreign education seemed only to have steadied his early imbibed religious principles; at no time was he infected with the revolutionary spirit in politics, or touched by the free-thinking element in religion.[1]

Dr. Bullen, another highly-valued friend of the Aikenheads, did not escape in this respect quite so well as Mr. Roche: for he caught, during the years he spent on the Continent, more or less of the prevalant contagion, and though no propagandist of the views of the Encyclopædists, was, to say the least, not remarkable for his orthodoxy. But he was a fine character: nature had endowed him with a good heart; and the manners of the ancient regime sat well on him. He was not only charitable, but he showed the greatest respect to the poor. Whenever he was called in his professional capacity to attend a person in reduced circumstances, it was remarked that he would be sure to go in his carriage as if to a prince. So far from taking a fee in such a case he would send the patient the nourishment he prescribed. When attending the affluent he was by no means so particular as to

[1] Mr. Roche in later years was a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Dublin Review, Notes and Queries*, &c. He printed a collection of these papers, in 1851, for private circulation. This work, entitled, "Essays, Critical and Miscellaneous, by an Octogenarian," 2 vols., is full of information and remarkably interesting. The author died in 1853, in his 83rd year.

the style in which he made his professional visit. In society he showed the same chivalrous spirit; and if there happened to be in the company a lady who had known better days, Dr. Bullen would take her on his arm and lead her to a place of honour among the guests. He had been an apprentice of Dr. Aikenhead, and had a high regard for him and every member of his family. Mrs. Bullen was regarded, and with good reason, as a saint; her piety and her goodness in every relation of life were known to all. The children of this worthy couple grew up with the younger Aikenheads; and from first to last a cordial intimacy subsisted between young and old of the respective households.

Included in the circle that constantly met in Mary Aikenhead's youth at the hospitable board of the Catholic citizens were the bishop, Dr. Moylan; his coadjutor, Dr. Florence MacCarthy; the pastors of the different parishes, and the friars attached to the religious houses. No way inferior to the laity in general information and conversational powers, the clerical guests enjoyed a good talk as well as the rest, contributed their quota to the general fund, and helped to keep the tone of the society at a high standard.[1]

For an example of patriarchal dignity and sweetness there was no need to look beyond Dr. Moylan, whose still fresh complexion, and flowing white locks thrown back from the broad placid forehead, gave a peculiar attractiveness to his appearance. He was not only loved by his own flock, but highly esteemed by the Protestant party. The cotemporary and personal friend of Edmund Burke, he had lived through eventful times, when the rebellion of '45, the American war, the French revolution, and the insurrection of '98, were in turn the topics of the hour. Having been educated abroad, he returned home to enter, at his father's desire, a mercantile career; but a marked vocation drew him to the Church, and he went back to France to commence his theological studies at the University of Toulouse. After his ordination he was appointed by the Archbishop of Paris to the charge of a parish in the capital. However, a longing to return to Ireland and devote himself to a mission which stood in greater need of devoted priests than the France, as it was presumed, of that day, took possession of the Abbé; he gave up the easy and honourable position he enjoyed and sailed for Cork to dedicate all his energy and zeal to the poor Catholics of the old land. He was not destined to labour in obscurity. He was named Bishop of Kerry; and, in 1787,

[1] Wakefield, writing about this very time, says, that the priests with whom he became acquainted "had all received part of their education in a foreign country; by a long residence abroad they spoke the French language with fluency, and had a very general knowledge of the affairs of the Continent; with England they seemed to be little acquainted, few of them having ever been there."—"Account of Ireland; Statistical and Political," vol. 2, p. 554.

was promoted to the see of Cork, left vacant by the defection of Bishop Butler, Lord Dunboyne. Dr. Moylan was so impressed with the idea that Irish people should stay at home and help their own people, and was so persuasive in stating his views on this point, that he induced several persons to adopt his opinion and change their course after they had gone abroad to live, as they hoped, in a sort of pious enjoyment for the rest of their days. Among those whom he thus influenced was Mary Aikenhead's aunt, the Mrs. Gorman already spoken of, who had set her heart on joining friends of hers who were nuns in the convent of the English Franciscans near Bruges. This hope she had been constrained to relinquish when the French revolution drove the community from their home; but it revived once more as soon as she learned that the Rev. John (afterwards Bishop) Milner had offered the refugees an asylum, received them with generous hospitality, and provided them with a residence near his own chapel at Winchester. Mrs. Gorman was actually in the last-named city arranging to fix her abode close to her religious friends, if not under the same roof with them, when Dr. Moylan, arriving on a visit to his friend, Mr. Milner, found his old acquaintance in the midst of her preparations. The bishop did not conceal his disapprobation. How, he asked, could she reconcile it to her conscience to live as she was doing, surrounded with every spiritual comfort, while so many of her nearest relatives were, in spiritual blindness, deprived of the light of faith? The admonition was not unheeded. Mrs. Gorman sacrificed her cherished purpose, and returned to Ireland to be an apostle in her own home.

A great friend of Dr. Moylan was the Abbé Edgeworth, whom he knew as a young ecclesiastical student at Toulouse and left after him in France. The Abbé's noble and self-sacrificing character was well known in Ireland. It is said that before the Revolution he was offered a bishopric in his native country, but declined to quit his humble mission in Paris. When the first rumbling of the Revolutionary storm was heard, and while people still ventured to talk of the disturbances in Paris as "a riot," Dr. Moylan pressed his friend to come to him, and bring over to Cork his mother and sister, who also were friends of the bishop and of his family; but he would not leave his charge. Presently things grew worse; the whirlwind tore up time-honoured institutions by the root; still, the priest would not forsake the little flock he had gathered round him—poor English and Irish exiles and friendless Savoyards—to whose service he devoted all his energies, and for whose sake he disregarded personal danger. His deliberate choice was to remain with the lowly and the desolate, and help them through the awful crisis. Dr. Moylan heard no more of his friend—the most unassuming yet most fascinating of men—until one day arrived the news that the French had led their king to the scaffold,

and that in the supreme hour, beside the discrowned monarch, there had stood, with serene majestic courage, the faithful priest whose dearest desire it was to minister to the sorest-tried and the most forsaken.[1]

There was a certain atmosphere of family life about the bishop's residence. One of his sisters kept house for him. Another sister, a specially dear friend of Mary Aikenhead, as we shall see by-and-by, was superior for a great number of years of the Ursulines in Cork. She had gone abroad with the intention of entering a convent on the Continent, but immediately after Dr. Moylan had "smuggled over his contraband freight" of nuns who were to make the foundation in Cork, she returned home and joined the new institute. The bishop had several brothers. One was General Moylan, originally a merchant, some time aide-de-camp to Washington, and afterwards commander of the cavalry during the American war; another, who had been a merchant at Cadiz, went likewise to the States, and became clothier-general to the army; a third was a lawyer in Philadelphia; a fourth, settled at L'Orient, "was singularly useful, in 1777, by managing a treaty between the American Commissioners and the Farmers General of France, for an annual supply of tobacco from America, which he concluded during Lord Stormont's residence at the court of France, and many months previous to the open rupture with that court."[2] Not much was said in Cork about the bishop's foreign connexions—the family and friends showed no disposition to bring forward, in public at least, the citizen-brothers of the great Republic. The bishop was ultra-loyal to the British crown; and much

[1] The Abbé Edgeworth's mother was the granddaughter of the great Archbishop Ussher. His father, a cousin of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, was a clergyman, and held the living of Edgeworthstown. The future Abbé was born in the vicarage house, and baptised in the church of which the family were strenuous upholders. In the very teeth of the penal laws the minister gave up his preferment, became a Catholic, realised whatever property he possessed, and with his wife, who shared his convictions, and their young family, migrated to France and settled at Toulouse. After the death of Louis XVI. the Abbé Edgeworth rendered many important services to the exiled royal family. He was offered, it is said, a pension by the British Government, but declined it in polite and grateful terms, saying that he could not think of adding to the expenses which the Government had already incurred, in providing for such a number of French emigrants. He caught a fever while attending some French soldiers of Napoleon's army who had been sent to Mittau, and after a few days' illness he died. The daughter of Louis XVI. attended his deathbed, administered medicine to him with her own hand, and received his dying breath. The court of Louis XVIII. went into mourning for this more than friend. The king wrote his epitaph; and the Duke and Duchess of Angouleme, the Archbishop of Rheims, and all the nobility of the court attended his funeral.—"Memoir of the Abbé Edgeworth." By C. Sneyd Edgeworth.

[2] See the account of the Moylans in the Marquis de Chastellux's "Travels in North America." The author describes in the most agreeable way the home and family of Colonel Moylan (as he then was), and bears testimony to the many excellent qualities of that very gallant and intelligent man, for whom he conceived a great friendship.

talk of "Moylan's Dragoons" would not have been prudent in those dangerous times.

But if Dr. Moylan, who had known France before the hurricane had swept across the land, could describe the men and manners of the old regime, there were others in the priestly circle who all too well could conjure up a scene of the reign of terror. For instance, there was Father Donovan of "the Little Friary." The good Capuchin was living with a noble family in Paris when the Revolution broke out. His friends fled away, and he, as having been concerned with aristocrats, was thrown into prison. One morning after he had spent the night preparing a number of his fellow-prisoners for death, he was suddenly called out with a batch of the condemned, and trundled off to the guillotine. Just as he was about to set his foot on the ladder, an officer of the French guard called out in Gaelic: "Are there any Irish among you?" "There are seven of us," cried Father Donovan. "Then have no fear," said the officer, who, immediately using his influence with the officials, had his seven countrymen set aside.[1] Father Donovan ultimately returned to Ireland, and chose for his own special work ever afterwards the task of preparing for eternity poor prisoners sentenced to death.

The Carthusian monk and emigré Abbé Gauthier was one of the socially well-known regulars resident in Cork at this time. Father Callanan, a Capuchin educated at Louvain, was another. Of the secular clergy the youngest, yet on the whole the most remarkable, was the Rev. John England, a man of great ability, untiring energy, and resolute will. Fired with the patriot's ardour, and bitterly remembering the sufferings of his own fathers in the penal days, his eloquent tongue and powerful pen could hardly be restrained within the limits deemed prudent in those troubled days; nor, indeed, did he breathe at ease, until, summoned to the new world and enthroned in the episcopal see of Charleston, he found himself among freemen, the citizen of a glorious Republic.

A contrast to this impassioned son of the soil was the parish priest of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Rev. John Murphy; a man of gentlemanly manners, a great lover of books, very zealous in providing for the due performance of Church ceremonial which had fallen into abeyance during the bad times, and devoted heart and soul to the service of the sick, the suffering, and the ignorant. He had grown up at the knees of Father O'Leary, who, a frequent guest at his father's house, took much notice of the boy, encouraged and helped him in his studies, and oftentimes associated him in his charitable works. The youth was sent abroad at an early age, and having chosen the ecclesiastical state, studied in France and Portugal. Having finished his theological

[1] See J. F. Maguire's "Life of Father Mathew."

course and received ordination he was pressed to accept a Professor's chair in the Irish College at Lisbon. However, Dr. Moylan, whom he was destined to succeed in the bishopric, recalled him to his own country, and soon after his return appointed him to a parish in Cork.[1]

Of still another type was the Rev. Jeremiah Collins, with his fine face, manly figure, dark flashing eye, and genial smile. Enthusiastically labouring for the advancement of the Catholic flock, his great desire was to see schools established in every quarter; and while he gave utterance to his hopes in ardent words that seemed almost prophetic, his thoughts reverted to earlier days when he himself, Virgil in hand, and perched on the ditch-side, kept watch for the hedge-master and his scholars, lest some hound of a discoverer should scent the learned quarry and seize the informer's prize.[2]

Conversation could not be other than discursive and entertaining when the interlocutors were men of excellent wit, and found in their own experience and the history of their fathers material enough for copious table-talk and fireside narratives, full, now of pathetic and now of amusing incident. Stories, the opening scenes of which had been enacted some twenty or thirty years before, were still developing, as we should now say, in serial chapters. No one knew what might yet turn up in those life histories; no one could forecast the end. There were o'er true tales of family life familiar to all, which outdid romance, and might have furnished the histrionic stage with situations of a powerfully dramatic character.

Some illustrious men had recently passed off the stage of life whose memory was such a living presence in the thoughts and speech of a community fond and proud of them, that the younger members of that society, in their maturer years could hardly satisfy themselves that they had not once on a time seen in the flesh these well-beloved countrymen and lovers. Foremost among these was Edmund Burke, whose friends, relatives, and correspondents were to be met with in that circle. He was not a native of Cork city or county; but his mother, the daughter of a distinguished Catholic family, was born and reared on the banks of the Blackwater; and Edmund himself knew the neighbourhood and the people so well, talked so much about them, and graced his oratory with imagery so plainly suggested by the picturesque and storied scenery of the district in which years of his boyhood were spent, that an idea subsequently prevailed of his having been born in Cork. His Catholic fellow-countrymen could hardly mention the name of that greatest of contemporary orators, statesmen, and philosophers, that most kindly and estimable of men, save with a tender accent and a proud heart-beat: for he

[1] See a biographical sketch of Bishop Murphy in Duffy's *Catholic Magazine*, vol. i.

[2] In the "Life of Father Mathew," will be found very characteristic traits of Dean Collins.

had helped them early and served them long, and the last public act of his life had been a generous effort once again to befriend them.

Another good friend lately lost was "the great Romanist priest, Father O'Leary," who, on a memorable day in the history of Ireland, was received by the Volunteers with presented arms as he passed through the streets of Dublin; whose panegyric was pronounced by Grattan; and whose influence was great enough to save the Religious Orders in moments of extraordinary peril. Though he had been absent from Cork during the latter years of his life, he left behind him so vivid a memory that people hardly realised the fact of his death when they heard he was no more; nor, indeed, would they have been greatly astonished if on a jovial evening a quick tap at the door were heard, and a slight, agile figure in a full-dress suit of brown stepped in, and the familiar face with its pleasant smile and high well-powdered wig appeared. They would have thought they had dreamt their peerless friend was dead; and the accustomed chair would have been drawn, whereon, being enthroned, the incomparable friar might drop his kindly words into their hearts and flash his witticisms around them.

James Barry's name was constantly mentioned just at that time. Not that his townsmen knew much of him personally, after he had studied in Italy and settled in London; or cared much for the strange, rude man, great genius though he was. But his death was recent; faults of manner and temper were lightly touched on; his early days were remembered when, scudding before the wind on board his father's coasting vessel, he fed his fancy on elemental sights and sounds, and chalked wild visions on the slanting deck. The accounts that had reached his native place of the great artist's lonely death-bed, and of his magnificent obsequies in St. Paul's, made a deep impression; and the story of his life was related over and over again in the city on which he had conferred honour in no small measure.

Everyday life was now and then agreeably varied by the arrival of inquiring strangers taking notes of men and manners in the south of Ireland, and by the visits of real though perhaps hitherto unknown friends. One of the most welcome of the latter was Bishop Milner. He came to Ireland to see with his own eyes a country concerning which there was a vast amount of talk going on just then, both in and out of Parliament, and to make acquaintance with a people who had been described as a race of savages; the term "wild Irish" being, as he said, as familiar to his ears as the term "wild beast." And he came all the more willingly to Cork, because his friend of friends was Dr. Moylan the bishop of that see. There was a great deal in the history and antiquities of the country to engage Bishop Milner's philosophic mind, and the phase through which the Catholic body was passing attracted all his attention and sympathy; he spared no pains

in acquiring an accurate knowledge of the state of affairs in the country, and he certainly prepared himself to form an independent judgment. He made it a practice when driving through the remote districts to descend from his chaise and talk with the country people on the road; and when he came to a school, he would go in and examine the classes. The swarms of handsome, healthy children at the cabin doors did not escape his attention; nor did the increasing wealth of the Catholics of the towns who were beginning to purchase landed property. The number of barracks dotting the country, and the enormous military force kept as a garrison in Ireland, amazed him. The conclusions he drew from his survey were highly favourable to the Irish; the people had their faults, he plainly saw, but he had no hesitation in giving them a high place as a Christian and civilised people; and he was decidedly of opinion that in the matter of education the poor of Ireland were far in advance of his own countrymen of a corresponding class. Indeed, the extraordinary exertions made by the Catholics to educate the poor of the flock filled him with astonishment.[1]

Dr. Milner's stay in Cork was the occasion of much social festivity. The hospitable citizens delighted in doing honour to the worthy and distinguished guest of their own venerable bishop, and were gratified by his just appreciation of the scenery of the South. A water party was got up for his special amusement, and he was attended down to Cove and up the river again by a flotilla of twenty sail—a fair breeze swelling the canvas, and a band of music filling the air with melody. The social humour of his new friends he could not help enjoying, though it may now and then have been a degree too strong for a man who, as he himself said, so far from being able to make a pun, did not even understand one when it was made.[2] But if his entertainers surpassed him in intellectual frolic, he was more than a

[1] Dr. Milner, in one of his letters from Ireland (1807), thus writes: "I shall state to you a fact which I have lately learned from a military officer of equal honour and discernment. He said that, having raised a company of soldiers composed of nearly the same number of Englishmen and Irishmen, he found so many more of the latter had learned to read and write than of the former, that he was obliged to choose most of his sergeants from amongst them. . . . . If what is stated should be well-grounded, how much is the English public imposed upon by the incessant and loud complaints with which it is stunned on the subject of the alleged brutal ignorance of the Irish poor, and their total want of education, as if they were a race of savages, unacquainted with the use of letters, and utterly destitute of Christian and moral instruction! If this were true, the fault would not rest with them, but with their government, which, till late years, prohibited their having masters of their own religion. But it is not true; for as to the use of letters, I really believe, conformably to the statement of my friend the officer, that a greater comparative number of them are acquainted with it, than of the poor cottagers in our own country; and with respect to Christian and moral information, I know and am sure that the former are learned compared with the latter."

[2] Provost Husenbeth's "Life of Dr. Milner," p. 545.

Woodbury type.

MARY AIKENHEAD.

*From a Miniature supposed to have been taken when she was in her twentieth year.*

T. CRANFIELD AND CO., DUBLIN.

match for them in width of view and deep philosophic thought; and they listened to his strongly-expressed and energetically-delivered opinions with the liveliest interest. This visit was, for many reasons, an event in the Catholic social circle, and an event, too, of the most pleasurable kind. Even the children had their share of enjoyment. It was a wonder to them to see a foreign bishop along with their own two bishops in a room of an evening; and as they had hitherto known only one type of the episcopal dignitary—their own Dr. Moylan and Dr. MacCarthy with whom they were as much at home as if they were their grandfathers—the youngsters scanned with close attention the right reverend stranger, whose florid colour, grizzled hair, animated expression, broad shoulders, and vigorous step, were characteristic of quite another sort of saint. But soon the heartiest friendship sprang up between the vicar-apostolic of the midland district and the youthful members of Cork society; for children were never overlooked by the great man, who excelled in story-telling and delighted in having a group of breathless listeners around him.

Such were the people among whom Mary Aikenhead spent her life until she was about one-and-twenty years of age, and such was the spirit of the society that helped to develop her character and talents. She was herself no insignificant member of that society: being much observed and greatly liked. Well ordered in her own life, blessed with a cheerful temper, and genial in her ways, she was companionable and helpful to all. Her kindly generous disposition made it easy for her to recognise what was good in those she came in contact with, and to get on smoothly with them. Therefore, it was pleasant to meet her in the day's walk, and delightful to live under the same roof with her. She set about her business in the morning as if nothing suited her better than affairs of a prosaic order. Those with whom she had serious though commonplace transactions, possibly considered that she had more than a fair share of advantages; at any rate, they thought it a pleasure to do a service to so very handsome and agreeable a young lady, and highly satisfactory also to have dealings with one so remarkably sensible and clear-headed. At the social dinners and in the evening conversations it was abundantly evident that she was fond of reading and was conversant, like those around her, with the best literature of the day. If she did not talk much herself, she could enjoy the talk of other intelligent people; and whatever observations she made were not without sense or point.

Pleasant evening parties, bringing young and old together to enjoy good music, and join in or look on at the lively dance, were a constant source of enjoyment in those days. The number of pretty girls dressed in white with coloured shoes and sashes; the naval and military officers in their uniforms; the civilian beaux in suits of green or blue or Spanish brown, made the scene a gay one.

Mary Aikenhead in her "sweet Irish style of innocent gaiety,"[1] entered heartily into the pleasures of the hour. No young lady was more in request as a partner; she was a first-rate dancer, light of step and easy of carriage in the country-dance, but excelling in the minuet. Her figure, though well formed, was rather full at this time, and her friends thought her handsomer when a slight girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age. Her style of beauty would probably attract greater admiration in our day than it did in her own, for then litheness and an airy grace were thought more distinguished than an imposing presence.

Mary Aikenhead, while very popular with the dancers, was an object of considerable interest to the older guests who were among the lookers-on. Those turbaned matrons, and those queued and powdered heads of families, made confidential comments to one another as they sipped their tea and tapped their silver snuff-boxes. They noticed how a natural vivacity and a certain youthful dignity were combined in her; they remarked her good-natured care of others, and the way in which she avoided ever becoming herself the centre of a circle. They made up their minds that there was a soul of no common order looking out of those eyes: expressive, changeful eyes, which some said were gray, and some believed to be bright hazel, and others pronounced the very next thing to jet black. Those handsome hands, they thought, would be likely to do well whatsoever work was set them; and they should be greatly mistaken, indeed, if the girl who now so lightly yet so firmly stepped across the scene, did not on some future day tread with distinction a greater stage.

Truth to say, Mary Aikenhead appeared to advantage in these gay parties, where amusement was not turned into a tiresome pursuit, nor easy intercourse crushed beneath the weight of stupidity and numbers. Sleep was not murdered by these reunions, which, indeed, generally terminated for the young people in a brisk walk home. Opera cloaks and Indian shawls were not then in requisition to muffle up young ladies and protect them from a blast on the three steps between the door and their carriage. When the dowagers had been comfortably seated in their sedans, the girls pinned up their fur-belowed skirts, tied on their strong shoes, drew the hood of their cloaks over their comely faces, and, escorted by their beaux and trusty domestics, trudged along under favour of the moonlight or the glimmer of the chairmen's lanterns, enlivening the road with snatches of song—echoes of the harmonious strains of an hour ago—until an opened shutter, revealing a reproachful-looking nightcap, reminded the young men and maidens that all the world were not as light-hearted and tuneful as themselves.

[1] Thomas De Quincey.

Mary Aikenhead, however, had other occupations besides housekeeping and monetary affairs, other joys besides musical evenings and merry dances. She did not magnify her household cares into so stupendous a piece of work, or toil so excessively over the amusements of life as to leave herself no time to bestow on the poor, whom she had always loved. Accompanied by a young friend, Miss Cecilia Lynch, she made morning rounds of other than the fashionable quarters of the town, bringing relief to the indigent, comfort to the sorrowing, "kind words, so short to speak, but whose echo is endless," to all. And if with a free heart and a light conscience she relished the conversational feast of the dinner-table, and entered into the spirit of the gay drawing-room hours, may it not have been because she had earned her enjoyment? Not that her work for the poor was a hard service: possibly it was the most grateful task of all. The poor regarded her as specially belonging to them; she was their own Miss Mary. They loved to see her pass by; and when she entered the narrow, miry lanes, they came to the door to admire her and to send blessings with her as she threaded her way. Clearly they were of opinion that there was not so noble-looking a young lady in all Munster: and that was saying a good deal. Moreover, they strongly suspected (and this was saying vastly more), that in the whole kingdom of Kerry there could not be found anyone so clever or so 'knowledgable' as the said Miss Mary. Those who had known her as a child toddling along by her nurse's side, watched her all through with lively interest, and noted in words transmitted to their children and their children's children, how she grew up "good and humane, and humble, always going about among the poor, and never ashamed of them." Many of her lowly friends remarked that, no matter at what hour of the night she returned from a party, she never was late for the ten o'clock Mass next morning; and some who had the opportunity of observing her still more closely, confidentially informed their gossips that she used to burn down a whole mould candle while saying her prayers after she had been out at a dance!

Thus did God's poor chronicle her daily deeds of piety and charity, keeping the record for heaven, and weaving her name into their prayers.

Possibly Mary Aikenhead's friends, whether rich or poor, had no other ambition for her than that she should make a good marriage, be the mistress of a happy and an affluent home, the adored wife of a worthy man, and the mother of a troop of children, clever, handsome, and virtuous, like herself. But her own previsions did not stray in that direction. Her early conversion, her keen sense of the deliverance she had had from the bonds of error and the tyranny of a worldly spirit, and her gratitude for God's mercy had long ago disposed her for another career. Her affections, strong and deep in character,

centred in her family and a little group of well-beloved friends: she needed, she desired no closer ties. From girlhood her ideal of happiness was the privilege of devoting herself to the service of the sick and suffering poor, and of vowing herself to this work in religion. The union of outside charitable work with the religious life, at least in the Ireland of that day, seemed a utopian idea. There was no Order, nor had there ever been an Order in the country, whose rule it was to relieve the destitute in their homes, and to receive the sick into hospitals under the care of nuns. In two remarkable cases of comparatively recent occurrence, hopes had been entertained that such an institute might be founded in Cork, but there were too many difficulties in the way, and the idea had to be given up. Still, Mary Aikenhead's thoughts were busy with the subject; her heart glowed, and her eyes kindled, as she listened to Dr. Moylan's account of the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, whom he had known in France.

If charity had not been, as it were, born with her, she would have caught the divine contagion from the coadjutor bishop, whose love of the poor and zeal for souls approached the measure bestowed on apostolic men. Dr. MacCarthy had been her great friend from the day when his touching discourse on Dives and Lazarus made so profound an impression on her: he was now her confessor. The example of his life of self-sacrifice impressed her as his eloquent words had done; and she had the best opportunity for studying under so good a master, for he was personally and deeply interested in her, and did not grudge her a share of his precious time, or of that intimate conversation from which the young will oftentimes learn more than from pulpit oratory or printed books.

As time went on there appeared to be still less likelihood that her dream could ever be fulfilled, and she had only to decide whether she would give up the service of the suffering poor or renounce the idea of conventual life. To conclude in the latter sense was not possible, once she believed herself called to the religious state, and there appeared nothing more to be done than to enter a convent, as soon as she should feel herself at liberty to leave home. In Cork, at any rate, there was not much room for choice. There were only two convents in that part of the world: one the home of the Ursulines, and the other the mother-house of the Presentation order. Mary had relatives and dear friends among the daughters of St. Ursula. She knew well the interesting story of the foundation, and saw the noble work the nuns were doing in educating women so as to make them fi companions for intelligent men, and worthy to bring up Christian families. Fine types of womanhood wore the habit in that community: women who had lived in the world and who knew its needs; and who, when their pupils were removed from their care, and had returned to their homes, did not cease to take an interest in their after-life, and

act, in their regard, the part of true friends and wise counsellors. That these Christian teachers did their work well she could not doubt, for several of the most estimable women of her acquaintance had been educated at the convent, and now were placing their own daughters under the same care. As a child, Mary had often gone with her aunt, Mrs. Gorman, to visit at the convent; and as a girl, she was in the habit of going to see her religious friends, either alone, or in company with former pupils who needed but a trifling excuse to bring them into the presence of their well-beloved nuns. A tender friendship subsisted from first to last between her and the superioress, Mother Louis Moylan. The latter had much of the simple sweetness that characterised her right reverend brother; while she had great experience, and possessed intellectual gifts of a high order. Another of Mary's religious friends was Mother Borgia MacCarthy, the sister of the coadjutor bishop, and a fascinating woman, if ever there was one inside or outside the walls of a convent. The good Ursulines were not without a hope that their young friend would join them in their pious labours, and, indeed, at one time it seemed to Mary that she should do so. But, then, the poor always rose up before her mind; and as she stood at the window of the convent parlour, and her eyes rested on the plain pile of the Presentation buildings reared nigh hand, a feeling of self-reproach would steal upon her, and she would ask herself why she was not going there, where her life and services would be devoted exclusively to the poor.

True, the Presentation nuns were bound to enclosure, and could not go abroad to aid the destitute and tend the suffering. Still, they were vowed to the poor, and their vocation was to rescue from the reproach and danger of ignorance the children of the lower orders, who flocked into their schools in multitudes. In all probability the final decision would have been in favour of the Order vowed to this humble but vitally important work, if it had not been for a promise made to her friend, Cecilia Lynch. This young lady was preparing to enter a convent of mitigated Poor Clares at Harold's Cross, near Dublin; and so pleased was she with all she knew of the institute, that she greatly desired to attach Mary Aikenhead to it also. A promise was therefore exacted that no decision should be come to until the convent of St. Clare had been visited.

The journey from Cork to Dublin, which, little more than twenty years before, could not have been accomplished in less than five or six days, had been shortened to a run of twenty-two hours, through the enterprise of Mr. Anderson, a merchant and banker in Cork, who started between the two cities the first mail-coach that ever ran in Ireland. People were therefore in the habit of speaking of the trip as if it was a mere afternoon ride. But Mary Aikenhead had no friends in Dublin, and it did not seem quite easy to set out on such an expedition for the

mere purpose of seeing a convent. Soon, however, an opportunity was afforded her of visiting Dublin, seeing St. Clare's, and becoming acquainted with an altogether different circle from that in which she had grown up in her native city.

The profession of a young lady, Miss Cecilia Ball, took place at the Ursuline Convent, late in the year 1807; and among others there came from Dublin to be present at the religious ceremonial, the novice's sisters, Mrs. John O'Brien and Miss Fanny Ball. It is not too much to say that these ladies created a sensation on their arrival in the pleasant southern city. Mrs. O'Brien, then about twenty-two years of age, was strikingly handsome; tall, slight in figure, and stately in carriage. She dressed with elegance, and the fashions of the day—the Spanish beaver hat and feathers, and the long pelisse of puce, maroon or carmelite velvet—suited her admirably. The young matron was the observed of all observers, without, however, casting into the shade her sister's girlish grace and classic beauty. Mary Aikenhead soon made the acquaintance of the strangers: of whom, indeed, she had oftentimes heard her friend, Miss Lynch, speak in the highest terms. She knew already that Mrs. O'Brien held a distinguished place in Catholic society in Dublin, and devoted a great deal of her time to the care of the poor and afflicted; but she could hardly have been prepared to see "a Sister of Charity living in the world," appearing thus in the guise of a woman of fashion: for such was the impression made at first sight by that lady's majestic presence and exquisite attire. Possibly the surprise only heightened the interest of a meeting, which had in it the inexplicable prevision of a near and dear relationship, and was, in truth, the first beginning of a friendship which was quick in growth, serious in results, and life-long in duration. Before leaving Cork Mrs. O'Brien pressed Miss Aikenhead to spend some time with her in Dublin. The invitation was gladly accepted; and, in the course of the following year, Mary travelled to the capital, and remained for a considerable time the guest of her new friends, Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien, at their town residence in the lately-built Mountjoy-square.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### DUBLIN AFTER THE UNION—CATHOLIC LIFE—OLD CHAPELS—DANIEL MURRAY—ST. CLARE'S CONVENT.

MARY AIKENHEAD'S visit to the Irish capital was more like a transplantation to a new climate than a removal from one province to another of the same land. Dublin was a contrast to gay, busy, self-satisfied Cork. The city had not recovered from the shock which the Union had given to its prosperity. The streets were deserted, most of the fine

houses were shut up, the silence of the once lively thoroughfare was uninterrupted, save by sullen mutterings and heart-broken complaints. The general depression which prevailed was rendered all the more intense by the mournful beauty of the city itself, whose buildings, with their fair colonnades of Portland stone and their sparkling granite fronts as yet unstained by time, looked like nothing but monuments of a prosperity untimely ruined, and of hopes sunk in an early grave. And, as if to add a stroke of irony to the injuries already inflicted, the plans which, some years before the Union, had been adopted for the still further improvement of the city, were only brought to a completion when there seemed to be no longer any need for opening up communications and beautifying public places. Sackville-street, which originally had extended only from Rutland-square to Abbey-street, was now opened up from the Rotundo to the new bridge; but there seemed no particular purpose served by its dreary elongation, except when a martial viceroy chose to order a review of troops to take place there, for the reassurance of the dispirited citizens.[1] The narrow streets and tortuous lanes which had filled up the space between the House of Lords and the river, had recently disappeared to give place to a handsome street, extending from College-street to the bridge, and perfecting the communication—a convenience hardly then appreciated—between the north and south sides of the city. College-green had lapsed into a silence almost as complete as that which oppressed the place when it was known as "the village of Hoggin Green, near Dublin." There was no stir thereabout, except in the evening, when strangers and idlers assembled to see the mail-coaches turn out from the yard of the old Post Office, and start for the different roads, north, south, and west: every coach provided with a double guard armed with blunderbus and pistols, and escorted by a dragoon on the right hand and the left, to see the convoy safe some two or three stages out of town.

When the members of Parliament had been obliged to take the road to London, the Irish nobility broke up their Dublin establishments, and the gentry remained all the year in their country mansions, striving, though perhaps with only half a will, to retrieve the fortune which a succession of extravagant seasons in the capital had helped to ruin. Dublin sank to the position of a provincial town, and the pecuniary loss to the inhabitants was estimated as equal to the with-

[1] Lord Cathcart (April, 1804,) reviewed the infantry of the garrison, about 5,000 men, in Sackville-street: the line extending from Carlisle Bridge into Blessington-street, beyond the Barley Fields (the site on which the foundations of St. George's Church had recently been laid). During that and the following year—perhaps for longer—signs of the times were conspicuous on every house-front in Sackville-street, as well as in other quarters of the city. Householders were obliged to paste on their door a paper mentioning the names and occupation of all residing in the house.

drawal of one million annually of circulating cash. The grievance complained of by the citizens was therefore anything but a sentimental one. In fact it was only too evident now, that when the Imperial united standard was unfurled on Dublin Castle, and the bells of St. Patrick's Cathedral rang a peal to commemorate the enactment of the Legislative Union, the flaunting banner was but the sign of irretrievable disaster, and the bells smote the ear as the knell of civic prosperity.[1] Protestants and Catholics alike suffered from the new state of things. The former, more accustomed to give free expression to their opinion on public questions, complained the loudest, and were in fact the first repealers. But, to the Catholics, though they spoke less openly on the subject, the Union was specially abhorrent: for the Act was, in their regard, only a fresh betrayal. They had been assured, on the faith of a minister of the British crown, that Emancipation was to follow the accomplishment of the Union. Archbishop Troy and some of the clergy and laity, believing that no price would be too great to pay for the liberation of the Catholic millions, lent their aid in disarming opposition to the measure. The Union was carried, the bells were rung; but the Catholics seemed as far as ever from the day of their deliverance. There had entered, however, a new grief into the life-history of the people, and the temper of the hour was a hectic alternation of sullen self-reproach and fierce exasperation.

There were other reasons, too, for the sadness that brooded over the city and found voice in the homes of the people. The late insurrections had left terrible traces in every direction. A multitude of families had lost relatives by a bloody or ignominious death; friends were in exile, some in France, some in America, some no one knew where; from the country parts not a few had made their way to the

[1] O'Connell heard the bells, and was maddened to think of "a joyful peal ringing for Ireland's degradation, as if it was a glorious national festival." Twenty-seven years later the Catholics were emancipated; St. Patrick's bells rang no peal, but the news was announced in tongues of fire all over the land. "I was a boy," writes Mr. Aubrey de Vere, "when that great measure was passed, but I have not forgotten it; I can recollect standing upon the steps before my father's house, and as I watched the fires of rejoicing which lit up their luminous cypher along the distants hills, growing numerous by degrees as the glow of a summer's evening dissolved, some portion of that enthusiasm which is not denied to the hearts of the very young in a country however outworn kindled within me."—"English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds," 2nd edition, p. 96.

[2] A strange light is thrown on this subject in the "Memoirs of Colonel Miles Byrne," who, having fought on the popular side in '98, escaped to France, entered Buonaparte's Irish Legion, and in course of time rose to a high rank in the army of France. When the legion was at Mayence, in 1806, 1,500 Poles who had been in the Prussian army, asked to enter the French ranks after the battle of Jena. They were incorporated into the Irish Legion, and with them came a great number of Irishmen. The latter, implicated in the rebellion of '98 and taken prisoners, were, during their captivity in Ireland, sold by the English Government to the King of Prussia to work in the mines. When hostilities were about to commence with France, these miners, being very strong and intelligent men, were obliged to enter the Prussian ranks. Their delight was great, when subsequently they found

capital seeking the safety which is often found in a crowd, and hoping to make out subsistence in following very humble paths, oppressed with a grief for which there was no cure, and adding their own sorrow to the common stock.

And yet, despite the troubles of the time, the Catholics of Dublin had kept a firm hold on whatever advantage they had painfully acquired: nay more, they were actually rising into importance. For some generations past the Catholics' only opening to advancement had been through the trading ranks. This was so obvious, and the pressure of poverty had become so intolerable, that some of the old gentry sent their younger sons to Dublin to be brought up to mercantile pursuits. These young men in course of time grew into rich, middle-aged merchants, enjoying the luxuries if not the honours of life, and, proud of the success which enabled them to surround their family with comforts and elegancies, regarded with anything but envy the rights of primogeniture which secured to the heir of the family distinctions a sinecure title and a roofless castle. By-and-by opinion in this direction extended still further, and it came to be considered creditable to enlist in the industrial ranks rather than vegetate in gentlemanly idleness, or starve on pride alone. What had been respectable a generation or two earlier as typifying fidelity to principle was now looked upon as nothing better than an absurd adhesion to antiquated conceits. Many of the Dublin merchants and traders had, their Catholicity notwithstanding, amassed considerable wealth, and attained a position socially high though politically unimportant. Fortunately they were to a great extent engaged in branches of business hardly if at all affected by the Union, such as brewing, distilling, discounting, and provisioning the troops on service in the Peninsula, and therefore safely tided over the crisis that had proved the ruin of so many of their fellow-citizens.

Mary Aikenhead, on coming to Dublin, found herself in the midst of this thoroughly Catholic, prosperous, but unemancipated circle. Mrs. O'Brien's father, Mr. Ball, had in pre-union times amassed a considerable fortune in the silk trade, which, introduced into Dublin by the

themselves enrolled with their countrymen in the Irish Legion. Among them Miles Byrne recognised several (and he gives their names) who had been out with him in Wexford and Wicklow; and Captain Ware of the same corps found many who had fought by his side in Kildare. Mallowney, a man who had been wounded at Castlebar, and sentenced to transportation, attained to the rank of Sergeant-Major in the Prussian army. He got the same position in the Irish Legion, and in the campaign of 1813 was one of the most distinguished captains in the regiment. The rations, the pay, and the whole condition of the French army were so superior to those of the Prussian troops, that the Poles and the Irish were enchanted with the French service. Marshal Kellerman was greatly pleased with the appearance of the men when he reviewed the corps a few days later; he complimented the Irish, saying that their bravery was proverbial, and their attachment to France well-known; he also told them that he had been, when a boy, a cadet in one of the regiments of the Irish Brigade.—"Mémoires d'un Exile Irlandais." Tome Premier, 431–32.

Huguenot refugees and fostered by their industry, had become a flourishing branch of manufacture. Mr. Ball's house of business had been in Werburgh-street, his residence was in Eccles-street. Mrs. O'Brien's only brother, destined to be the second Catholic raised to the judicial bench after emancipation, as Judge of the Common Pleas, was now going through college preparatory to being called to the bar. Among his friends and fellow-Catholics who were studying with the same view, and who succeeded like him in reaching a position hitherto unattained by "Irish Papists," were Michael O'Loghlen, in course of time the first Catholic Master of the Rolls in Ireland since the reign of James II.; Richard Lalor Sheil, the future orator, writer, minister at the court of Tuscany, and Vice-President of the Board of Trade; Stephen Woulfe, afterwards Chief Baron of the Exchequer; and Thomas Wyse, who died while British minister at the court of Athens. All these young men, with the exception of O'Loghlen, received their education, first at Stonyhurst, and secondly at the University of Dublin.[1]

Mr. John O'Brien was a partner in a highly respectable mercantile house engaged in the foreign import trade, whence he derived a handsome income; his brothers, his sisters, and his partners, were all in good circumstances; the friends of the family were for the most part wealthy and in the same position; all were alike remarkable for their charity to the poor and their liberality in supporting the clergy, the chapels, and the few institutions which it had been possible to establish in the difficult times not yet passed away. Mrs. O'Brien, universally admired as she was, had no more sincere sympathiser than her husband, who, approving her tastes and placing unbounded confidence in her judgment, allowed her full liberty of action and the command of a well-replenished purse. She had very decided notions concerning the duty of Catholics at that particular time; they should not any longer continue, she thought, to hide in back streets, to wear that cowering expression which distinguished them in public places from their Protestant fellow-countrymen, to allow themselves to be jostled off a path which they had as much right as any of their countrymen to tread. Mrs. O'Brien assuredly was no discredit to her party; it would have been hard to find any shortcoming in her or her surroundings; everything about her was in the very best taste; her house was elegantly appointed, her carriages and horses were unexceptionable, her own presence was singularly imposing. Mary Aikenhead was not long in discovering the *raison d'être* of all this care and expenditure; nor was she long in finding out what interests

[1] Interesting sketches of the Right Hon. Judge Ball, Sir Michael O'Loghlen, Bart., the Right Hon. Richard Lalor Sheil, and the Right Hon. Stephen Woulfe, will be found in Mr. O'Flanagan's "Bar Life of O'Connell." For Sir Thomas Wyse, K.C.B., see Mr. Webb's "Compendium of Irish Biography."

were the dearest of all to her friend. These were the interests of the Catholic community, and everything connected with the poor, the helpless, the afflicted; the very subjects, in fact, which most engaged her own sympathies. In the morning the two friends were sure to be engaged in helping some work belonging to one or another of the chapels; in the afternoon they went about, still with some good in view; in the evening their delight was to wrap themselves in their cloaks and take their way through miserable lanes and up crazy stairs, bringing to the sick and poor food for the body and comfort for the soul.

The Catholic chapels of that day were invariably hid away in the meanest quarters of the city; a stranger would find it difficult to recognise their sacred character and distinguish the house of God from the stables, the hucksters' stores, and the old furniture shops that closely pressed upon its walls. Unsightly structures were these old chapels, but sacred as the oratories of the Catacombs. They had sheltered the flock; the supplications of the faithful, sent up within the sombre walls, had filled the angels' censers whose incense is the prayers of saints; the voice of true shepherds had been heard from their pulpits, animating, strengthening, and consoling the stricken sheep. Each of these chapels had its traditions, its special characteristics—something or another which made it a place of pilgrimage as well as a house of prayer.

The parish chapel of the Ball family was that of St. Michan, in Mary's-lane, and was remarkable for having been successively served during a long course of years by members of the Society of Jesus, whose houses and schools had early been established in Ireland. Whenever it had been possible to do so the Jesuits lived in their residences and colleges; when they dared not do so, they accepted shelter and hospitality in the houses of the Catholic gentry, or shared the duty of the secular clergy. At an early period they had a residence in the parish of St. Michan, and from that house sent out auxiliaries who had been trained in the colleges of the society in Italy, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, and France, to aid the parish priests in town and country. St. Michan's had, after as well as before the suppression of the society, a succession of pastors who were sons of St. Ignatius. The devotions practised in the Jesuit churches throughout the world were kept up in Mary's-lane chapel, which on that account was greatly frequented by the pious. The altar was attended to by ladies of the parish, among the number being Miss Fanny Ball, and everything was therefore kept in becoming order.

In Rosemary-lane stood the parish chapel of St. Michael and St. John. The pastor was the venerable Jesuit, Dr. Betagh, who, bent with age and worn out with toil, was still to be seen in his chapel

during the morning hours, in the schools during the afternoon, and in a wretched cellar at night whither young men who had been at work in the day-time came for instruction when their toil was over. On Sundays he slowly ascended the pulpit and preached to a large congregation who read a touching homily in the very appearance of the venerable man. The people of Dublin held him in extraordinary veneration, and often wondered what would become of the Catholics of the city when Dr. Betagh should be called to his reward. In that lowly chapel the finest pulpit oratory had oftentimes been heard: Father Austin had preached there, and so had the former pastor, the eloquent Jesuit, Father John Murphy. Once on a time, too, the pulpit had been occupied by the now recently deceased Dean Kirwan—the humble Franciscan friar in his early days, the great preacher of the Protestant Church in his later life. Dr. Betagh, it was said, had not thought very highly of Father Kirwan as a priest, or of his style of oratory, which was, in his opinion, very theatrical and exciting, and quite out of place in the little old chapel of Rosemary-lane.[1]

The chapel to which the O'Briens usually went was that of their parish, St. Mary's, in Liffey-street. The archbishop, Dr. Troy, frequently officiated in this lowly edifice, which, not daring to show its front even in an obscure street, hid itself amongst a cluster of houses and could only be approached by a narrow passage leading from the pathway. The interior was not cheerful, for the windows, which were small and ranged on one side only of the building, admitted no more than a sort of twilight to play on the low ceiling, the gloomy galleries, and the one thing of beauty in the sacred edifice—a lovely Virgin and Child, copied after Raphael, and hung over the altar. The chapel was not half large enough for the congregation; and on Sundays the little yard, the narrow passage, and the street itself, were filled with an eagerly pious crowd striving to get as near as possible even to the external wall. From shortly before noon until one o'clock, at which hours respectively the last Masses were said, the patter of footsteps on the rough pathway was silenced by the clatter of hoofs and the roll of wheels on the roadway, for according to the fashion of that day all who had carriages rode in state to chapel. It

[1] See in Dr. W. J. Fitzpatrick's "Ireland before the Union" a very interesting memoir of Dean Kirwan. In D. O. Madden's "Revelations of Ireland" a curious incident is related. At the consecration of the Catholic Bishop, Dr. Nihell, the sermon was preached by Walter Kirwan, afterwards Protestant Dean of Killala. The preacher chose for his topic Apostasy! Dr. Butler, then Bishop of Cork, was present. The sermon was eloquent and striking; it pleased the assembled clergy. Three or four years later, the preacher himself conformed to the Established Church; and Dr. Butler, having inherited the title of Baron Dunboyne, renounced the priestly character, read his recantation, and married a cousin of his own.

was considered only right and becoming to have one's best horses and liveries seen in the labyrinth of lanes surrounding the parochial and conventual chapels. The intrusion on the scene of cumbrous family coaches might have seemed in some respects anything rather than desirable; but the pedestrian part of the congregation who were the sufferers, so far from taking umbrage at this arrangement gave it their highest approval. The going at mid-day and in high style to Mass was held equivalent to a profession of faith; and gentlemen who habitually preferred early devotions in undress subjected themselves to injurious comment.

There was no better place, especially on a charity sermon day, for seeing the Catholics of Dublin than Liffey-street and its precincts. The supporters of the charity, the admirers of the preacher, Archbishop Troy's particular friends, the Catholics of note throughout the city, mustered in full force on these occasions; and a crowd of people, who, not having a pound or thirty-shilling note to lay down on the collector's plate, would have thought it improper to enter the chapel and take up the place of a wealthier audience, remained outside and amused themselves with observing the families of the merchants and manufacturers as they arrived from the quays, or from Henry-street, or by the Smithfield side. Then, indeed, an inquiring stranger would have an excellent opportunity of hearing a popular account of the different families and learning all their genealogies. As the carriages of the Byrnes, the Mahons, the MacDonnells, and O'Briens; the Sweetmans, the Balls, and the Murphys; the D'Arcys, and Powers, and Molloys, and Keoghs, drove up, the bystanders freely made their remarks; and an attentive listener would not be left long in ignorance of the private worth, the commercial character, the presumed wealth of the portly gentlemen who descended with their wives in nodding plumes, their fair daughters in silk pelisses and laced flounces, their sons in suits of Spanish blue and olive green brilliant with gilt basket buttons, and proceeded to enter by the straight way and the narrow gate.

There was a special attraction, however, for Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien in the Liffey-street chapel. One of the curates of the parish, a very dear friend of theirs, officiated and frequently preached in that chapel. There was something singularly pleasing in his appearance and edifying in his deportment: his eyes were clear and dark, a fine forehead indicated the benevolence of his character; his hair, disembarrassed of powder and queue, fell loosely behind; his erect carriage, elastic step, and graceful movements gave him somewhat the air of a youthful abbé of the old school. When at the altar his devout recollection was so impressive that the pious liked to attend his Mass; while the earnest, well-delivered homilies he pronounced struck home to the hearts of his audience, who oftentimes felt that they derived greater

benefit from the curate's simple words than from a more ornate and highly-lauded oratory.

Mary Aikenhead had already met this clergyman, the Rev. Daniel Murray, at the house of her friend, Miss Lynch, in Cork; but the pleasing impression which his conversation had then made on her was now more than confirmed in the friendly intercourse she had with him in the company of Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien. He was constantly at their house, and not unfrequently after his early Mass on week days, which they attended, walked with them to Mountjoy-square, where they breakfasted together. This social meal was greatly enjoyed by Mary Aikenhead, who found the conversation of the hour exceedingly interesting. A good deal of charitable business work was discussed and organised on these occasions.

The Rev. Daniel Murray, though hardly yet forty years of age, had acquired considerable experience. He was well acquainted with the condition of the Catholic population—the difficulties and vexations which the wealthier classes met at every turn, and the countless forms of misery that pressed upon the poor, whose sufferings the Government took no trouble to alleviate, and whose destitution the plundered church was powerless to relieve. Born in 1768, near Arklow, in the county of Wicklow, his earliest ambition was to serve God at the altar and to minister to the poor and despised of his own nation. His family, considering the social state of the Catholics of their day, occupied a good position; for several generations past the Murrays[1] had been left in undisturbed possession of a good farm; their character stood high; it was not the landlord's interest to lose such excellent tenants, and the respect in which the family were held by all ranks, hedged them round in evil days, and saved them from plunder and dispersion.

Young Daniel was sent to Dublin to make his preparatory studies in Dr. Betagh's famous school, where his studious habits, gentle manners, and unobtrusive piety soon won for him the venerable Jesuit's special regard. When sixteen years of age, he went to Salamanca to make his theological studies in halls well filled with ardent youths—aspirants to the priesthood—from every province of dear old Ireland. Having been ordained in 1790, he returned to his native country, and after some time was appointed curate in the town of Arklow. While there he often had the happiness of offering up the Holy Sacrifice for his aged mother in the old home. By-and-by the events of 1798 spread desolation over the land and destroyed the peace of every household. Arklow was the scene of a terrible affray;

[1] Murray is a very ancient name in Ireland. One of the race was King of Connaught A.D. 696. The princely family of the O'Conors were of the Clan-Murray race. Roscommon was anciently called Siol-Murray, or the country of the Murrays; a district in Wicklow also derived its name from them.

the old parish priest was murdered in his bed; and his curate escaped by a sort of miracle, for he was fired at as he crossed the river at Shelton Abbey. His only safety was in flight; and so, taking horse, he rode to Dublin by a route full of difficulties and danger. The archbishop appointed him as curate in St. Andrew's parish, whence, after some time, he was removed to St. Mary's, to labour in the midst of a multitudinous flock destitute of nearly all the common resources of a Catholic community. It was enough to make his heart sink within him to witness the misery accumulated in the crowded back streets and lanes of the metropolitan parish, and to look around in vain for any adequate means of relieving their temporal distress or ministering to their grievous spiritual needs. But Daniel Murray's courage failed not; his soul was enflamed with that zeal which obstacles serve only to intensify; and, well understanding that "in this theatre of man's life it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers-on," he devoted all the strength and energy of an ardent yet withal patient nature to the perfect fulfilment of the laborious every-day duties of the hard-worked city priest. But though his works were humble and his labours spent in obscure fields, the saintly character of his aspirations, his complete self-devotion, and his singular ability were not unrecognised. The clergy of the diocese—many of them venerable in years when compared with him—looked on the Liffey-street curate with more than ordinary respect; his great old master, Dr. Betagh, watched his course with the liveliest sympathy, sustaining him in hope and courage; and the archbishop marked him as one rarely gifted by grace and nature, and destined to do good service to the Church and the people.

Meanwhile, Mary Aikenhead did not forget that the principal object of her visit to Dublin was to redeem the promise made to Miss Lynch, visit the convent of St. Clare at Harold's-cross, and learn what was the spirit of that institute and what were the charitable works to which the community were devoted. Just at that moment the Poor Clares and their new convent were a subject of considerable interest to the Catholics of Dublin, who spoke much of the past history and future prospects of a sisterhood which, like the daughters of St. Dominic, had clung to the land throughout the evil times and suffered with the people. They seemed to have been endowed with inextinguishable life; and the story of their sufferings and vicissitudes was more like a chapter of romance than the annals of a religious order. At one time they were forced to sail away to Spain, at another time they had to disperse over the country and hide among their relatives and friends. Now they were arrested and carried before the Lord Deputy; and again the Lords Justices issued orders for their apprehension, and at four o'clock in the morning a band of soldiers surrounded the convent and carried the nuns before the court. On one

occasion, when the soldiery attacked their convent, they had barely time to escape in boats across the lake, on whose shore they had fancied they might be suffered to dwell in peace. About the middle of the eighteenth century there was a community of Poor Clares in North King-street in Dublin. The nuns wore no particular habit only a black stuff gown with plain linen; were much visited by their friends and the pious Catholics to whom the convent chapel was like a glimpse of heaven itself; and went about very much as ladies living quietly in the world might do; thankful for the pity or the forgetfulness that left them unmolested for an interval.[1] Later on some of the community removed to Dorset-street, and having a more convent-like building to dwell in were able to live in closer conformity with their original rule. The situation was not as secluded as might be desired, and their meditations were not a little interrupted by the performances of their next-door neighbours, Macklin the actor and his pupils, who, in a garden "separated only by a wall not very high" from the nuns' enclosure, were wont to go through their exercises in sock and buskin, and train their voices for the stage.[2]

After a time the lease of the nunnery expired. The community being unable to pay the exorbitant sum demanded for its renewal, were in the utmost distress. Dissolution of the community was imminent when heaven sent them unlooked-for aid. Mrs. O'Brien and some members of her family, together with a few charitable friends, were just then engaged in establishing an orphanage for the protection and education of destitute girls. It was now proposed to the Poor Clares to take charge of this institution. On their consenting to do so the preliminary arrangements were completed, and there remained nothing more to do than to provide a suitable tenement for the nuns and their family of orphans. This however proved no easy matter. The prejudice against Popery and Romish religious persons was so great that landlords would not lease their houses to a community of nuns. The intrusion of a convent and its appurtenances into a respectable neighbourhood would have been counted highly detrimental to its interests and its character. A desirable house with sufficient

[1] Mrs. Delany in one of her amusing letters (January 19, 1751) tells of Miss Crilly, a nun and an old friend of her husband the Dean of Down, coming to dine with them at Delville. In this country, says Mrs. Delany, nuns have the liberty of going to see their relatives and particular friends. Miss Crilly had been ten years in France, and was extremely sprightly, civil and entertaining. After dinner Mrs. Delany carried her home to the convent in King-street, and having been invited to drink tea with the nuns, finished the evening in their company very agreeably. She saw their chapel and played on the organ, and admired their handsome reception-room, &c. &c. Writing at a later date Mrs. Delany says she does not see her nun Miss Crilly as often as she should like to do, "as people are so offended here if *those nuns* are much taken notice of, that I should be thought *disaffected*."—"Autobiography and Letters." First Series, vol. iii.

[2] See an entertaining account of these performances "in full hearing of their religious next-door neighbours" in O'Keefe's "Recollections," vol. i., pp. 284-6.

garden room was offered for sale at Harold's-cross, and the nuns' friends longed to see them become its owners. It was procured for them—so at any rate ran the story—by a good friend, a lawyer, who gave the original proprietor no further information than that it was wanted by a lady with a great many sisters; and the mother-abbess and her community were in possession of the place before the inhabitants of the vicinity had any suspicion of the objectionable character of their new neighbours. When the truth burst on their indignant minds, expulsion was impossible; all they could do was to hide the abode of the lady and her sisters as much as possible from public view; and this they proceeded to do by the erection of a very high wall. This proved to be about the best service that could have been rendered to the daughters of St. Clare, who were quite as anxious to exclude the great world from their view as the respectable people of the fashionable suburb were impatient to wall up the nuns. The archbishop was much interested in the institution, and on his solicitation a Rescript was given by the Holy See for such alterations and mitigations of the rule as were absolutely necessary for the new duties imposed on the community.

However much Mary Aikenhead would have liked to join her friend Cecilia Lynch, she felt no attraction to the order of the Franciscans. She saw at a glance that she could not find what she was in search of in the convent of St. Clare. In any case it would have been impossible for her to enter a convent just then. Home duties of a serious nature had devolved on her, and she felt that the claims of her family ought first to be satisfied. That there might remain no doubt in her mind on this point she resolved to consult the Rev. Mr. Murray on her spiritual affairs, for on his sanctity and judgment she felt she might implicitly rely. He entirely coincided in her view that she could not conscientiously take the step she desired as long as she was so much needed at home. Not the less firmly resolved to dedicate her life to the service of God in the poor, and not the less hopeful that a way would be opened to her at the right moment, she returned to Cork, and with the cheerful serenity that characterised her resumed the old routine with its real cares, its constant occupations, and its innocent relaxations. For the rest, works of piety and charity were undertaken and carried on with greater zeal than ever. If Mary Aikenhead did not as yet pass through miry lanes and ascend rickety stairs in the habit of a Sister of Charity, she was nevertheless a vision of delight, and a most sweet consoler to the poor whom she sought out in their obscurity, made much of in their abjection, and was busy about in deed and in thought from morning until night.

The chapel which she at this time frequented was that of the south parish, in which the coadjutor bishop officiated. The Stacpoles, great benefactors of the chapel as we have already said, had their

pew on the right-hand side; while on the left the Bullen family had theirs. Other families of note also had seats in that chapel. The catechism classes were conducted with the greatest care and regularity under Dr. MacCarthy's supervision. Some gentlemen and ladies of the congregation remained after the last Mass to teach the children: among the most indefatigable in this duty being Mary Aikenhead. Dr. MacCarthy himself always took part in the examination of the classes, and he was accustomed to wind up by giving a short instruction from the pulpit. On these occasions he adapted his language to the lowest capacity, while at the same time his discourse was extremely interesting and instructive to the educated part of his auditory. He made it a rule, as we are told by one who knew him well, to relate the history of some one of the remarkable characters recorded in the scriptures, impressing the minds of his hearers with such practical moral truths as happened to arise out of the subject. His words were not lost on Mary Aikenhead; nor did the influence of his remarkable personal character lessen as long as she had the good fortune to continue within its spell. He was a fine type of the vigilant pastor, the accomplished gentleman, the man of heart and intellect. But most of all was he admirable in his charity: he was emphatically the friend and the apostle of the poor.[1]

Before long an event occurred which brought sorrow into the home of the Aikenheads, and seemed to remove the realisation of Mary's hopes to a still more remote future. Mrs. Aikenhead was suddenly attacked with illness, and after three days of suffering died, leaving to her eldest child the sole charge of the family. Although virtually more closely bound than ever, Mary after a time—her sisters having been placed as boarders at the Ursuline Convent—found herself to a certain extent personally free. Thus she was able towards the close of 1809 to visit again her Dublin friends.

[1] Florence MacCarthy was born in Macroom, in 1761, and was a younger brother in a family of ancient lineage. His parents went to reside at Killarney, where dwelt Dr. Moylan, then Bishop of Kerry. The boy soon attracted the affectionate interest of the bishop, who appointed him, in 1777, to a place in the Irish College at Rome, where he remained for eight years. He obtained his degree as Doctor in Divinity before he was twenty-five years of age; and was held in high estimation. One of the Cardinals, then Secretary of State, having determined to go on a tour through Italy and a part of France, made choice of Dr. MacCarthy as the companion of his journey, and sent to the Irish College an invitation to that effect. But the youthful Doctor of Divinity had already quitted Rome for his own country. He arrived in 1785, and became curate to Dr. Moylan at Killarney. When the Bishop of Kerry was promoted to the See of Cork, he made Dr. MacCarthy his Vicar-General, and placed him over the parish of St. Peter and St. Paul; whence some years later he was removed to the south parish, the Catholic population of which numbered more than 20,000 souls. In 1803, he was named Bishop of Antinoe and coadjutor to Dr. Moylan. He still continued to discharge the laborious duties of a missionary in common with the curates of his parish: his iron constitution enabling him to go through an immense amount of work in the pulpit, in the confessional, and among the poor.—*Sermon preached at the Office for the repose of the soul of the Bishop of Antinoe*, by the Rev. John Ryan.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE NEW ARCHBISHOP—THE VETO—FATHER KENNY—SISTERS OF CHARITY FOR IRELAND.

SOME noteworthy events had taken place in the interval between Mary Aikenhead's first and second visits to Dublin. But the event which most intimately concerned the circle of ardent Catholics, of which the O'Brien family were such conspicuous members, was the advancement of their cherished friend, the curate of Liffey-street, to the episcopal dignity. Daniel Murray was now Archbishop of Hierapolis, and coadjutor in the See of Dublin, having been consecrated on the 30th of November, 1809, in St. Mary's chapel by the venerable Archbishop of Dublin: Dr. Betagh preaching the sermon appropriate to the occasion.[1] Mary Aikenhead entered fully into the delight of her friends at this happy change; yet it did not surprise her to hear that the announcement of his promotion to the mitre had been anything but a joy to the new archbishop, who was kept in total ignorance of his elevation until the mandate for his consecration arrived from Rome; and that it required all Dr. Betagh's authority and influence to prevent his refusal of the honour and the charge laid upon him. "Take care," said his old master in a final appeal to the conscience of the reluctant son of the Church, "take care not to resist the grace of the Holy Ghost!"

One day while Mary Aikenhead and Mrs. O'Brien were visiting at St. Clare's, Sister Ignatius Lynch told her friend that Dr. Murray intended founding a congregation of Sisters of Charity, and that he had proposed to her to remain disengaged until the foundation could be made: "but," added the nun, "not feeling up to the responsibility of a new order, I preferred remaining where I am." "Oh, Cecilia!" exclaimed Mary Aikenhead with uncommon earnestness, "why did you not wait?" Mrs. O'Brien was struck with the feeling conveyed in these words and reported the expression to Dr. Murray, who treasured them as a good omen. About this time the bishop of Cork visited Dublin, and was informed of the project which Dr. Murray

[1] Archbishop Troy writing, July 17, 1809, to Dr. Plunket, Bishop of Meath, says: "Many important considerations have induced me to petition his Holiness for a coadjutor, *cum titulo successionis*. He has granted my request in the most gracious manner, and appointed Rev. Daniel Murray, of my chapel, whose character cannot be unknown to your lordship. I shall say nothing of it at present, but must add that the appointment has given general satisfaction to the clergy and laity."—"Diocese of Meath," vol. iii., p. 385.

had at heart. As the two prelates on one occasion were speaking of the projected foundation, Mary Aikenhead, who was present, kindling at the notion turned to her own bishop, fervently exclaiming: "Oh! my lord, when will *you* bring Sisters of Charity to Cork?" These simple words had the effect of strengthening Dr. Murray in his already formed opinion that she was herself the chosen instrument whom God would employ to carry out the work, and so fully was he convinced of this that he at once commissioned Mrs. O'Brien to endeavour to engage her friend's consent and co-operation. Mary's reply was that if an efficient superior and two or three members undertook the work, she should certainly think that in joining them she was doing what God required of her. Dr. Murray, greatly pleased with this answer, felt assured that a great heart and a sound head would not be wanting when the time came for commencing the work he was so anxious to inaugurate; while Mary Aikenhead on her part thanked God for this manifest opening of the way, and for the great friend who had arisen to be her support and guide.

On returning to the south she went on a visit to her relatives, Dr. and Mrs. Gallwey, then residing at Mallow. The friendship of this worthy pair Mary greatly valued. Mrs. Gallwey, Dr. Aikenhead's only sister, was one of those earnest just-minded Protestants, who, never doubting the grounds of their own creed, allow to others the freedom of their convictions. Her niece had nothing to suffer in that household from the bad taste or unkindness of its members: but still as they were all Church-going people, the Catholic visitor found it no easy matter to attend to her religious duties. She could not reach the chapel for first Mass and then be home for the early meal; and when she desired to receive Holy Communion, a one o'clock breakfast was the consequence. Dr. Murray, who now kept up a correspondence with his young friend and well-beloved daughter in Christ, was far from approving a continuance of a practice such as this, which necessarily tended to injure health. He alludes to the subject in the following letter to her which bears the postmark of February 6, 1810, and is addressed in Mrs. O'Brien's handwriting:—

"I know not, my dear friend, if you will attribute my present feelings to ill-nature; but I must own that I already anticipate, with some degree of merriment, your surprise and disappointment, at observing the difference between the present scroll, and the well-known writing of the address. I trust, however, that, after the first regrets of disappointed hope shall have passed away, you will set the matter down to an innocent trick, and after giving it still a little more reflection, some other reason will probably occur to you, which may more fully account for it. I would next proceed to apologise for my long and sullen silence, if apology to you, who know me so well, were not a mere waste of time. My wishes for your happiness have suffered no diminution, and if I did not express them to you more frequently, it is because I knew you did not deem it necessary, and that you would rest fully satisfied with hearing from me through our ever-valued friends. Even

now I would not, perhaps, break in on your present round of amusements, but for the anxiety you feel with regard to certain points materially affecting your happiness, and which anxiety I, perhaps, may be able to allay. The amiable person to whom you communicate your troubles feels too lively an interest in all that concerns you, to keep them secret from me. You besides gave her some encouragement to make them known, when you asked my sentiments regarding them, and I now give you those sentiments without reserve.

"It is my decided opinion that you ought not to separate yourself permanently from your sisters, situated as they are at present. Indeed I don't see how you could bring yourself to do so, without a very severe struggle of conscience. I could, I think, offer some very strong reasons in support of this opinion, but they seem to have already suggested themselves to your own mind, and they appear to me so obvious, that I cannot avoid expressing my surprise, that they have made no impression on your *Cork Friend*, unless perhaps he may be in possession of some information to which I am a stranger. No, my dear friend, be a protection to your sisters; you are now the only parent they have to look to. Support them by your advice and example. To leave them at present would expose them to many dangers, and religion to much obloquy. If one of them were settled so as to be a protection to the other, or should any other circumstance arise which would leave them less in need of you, I would then by all means advise you to follow the inclinations which you have so long cherished, and which recent events have probably tended to confirm. Until there is a probability of your being soon able to carry your intentions into effect, I can see no reason for urging you to a decision, with regard to the particular spot which is to be the sphere of your duty. That, I think, you may with great safety, confine, for the present, within your own bosom. I never thought it right that you should finally commit yourself on that question, until all the obstacles to the accomplishment of your wishes should be removed.

"My dear Mary, you will stand in more need than ever of all your strength of mind, and all the resources of grace to keep your heart disengaged from the world. Under every discouragement, attend to your religious duties, with all the fervour possible. Though I am not displeased to hear of your one o'clock breakfast, because it shows something of the spirit that I would wish to see in you, I must beg of you not to encounter a similar adventure while you remain at Mallow. During your continuance there, it will be enough for you to attend otherwise to your devotions in the best manner you can. You may, if you please, after your return, make yourself amends for the losses you may have sustained. Write to me soon, and make no apology for communicating your troubles to me, who can never learn them with indifference. You were too stiff in waiting for my reply to your last, before you would address another line to me. You see when I think I can be of any use to you, I do not grudge you a moment. Anna Maria will soon write to you. Adieu,

"Ever affectionately yours,

"D. MURRAY."

The Anna Maria in the above is, of course, Mrs. O'Brien, who, early in the following summer, and while Mary Aikenhead was still with her relatives in Mallow, went there for the benefit of the waters. Mallow was at that time a place of fashionable as well as healthful resort. The spa enjoyed a high reputation, the air was balmy, the

scenery along the Blackwater most picturesque, and the pleasant company that assembled in the pretty town and tried the warm springs as much for amusement as from necessity, added considerably to the attraction of the place. The waters and the air, aided in their efforts no doubt by Mary Aikenhead's pleasant company, soon produced a beneficial change in Mrs. O'Brien, and the cough which had caused her friends considerable uneasiness began to disappear. Before it was thought safe for her to return to town, however, her friend had to leave for Cork. Mary's relatives, it would appear, were not pleased at finding her stay away from them so often and so long: they were, in fact, beginning to feel jealous of her Dublin friends; and she thought it best to please them and return home. The following letter, written to her by Dr. Murray shortly after her return to Cork, touches on these subjects, and contains an interesting reference to his own connection and that of Dr. Everard with the lately founded Royal College of Maynooth.[1]

"*Dublin, 4th July*, 1810.

"My dear Mary,

"I received your valued letter in due course, but knew you would not be much disappointed by my want of strict punctuality in answering it. I cannot, however, omit the opportunity which the return of your venerable bishop affords me, of expressing the pleasure I felt at hearing of your safe arrival and kind reception by those friends, whose affections you were most anxious to retain. Surely the sacrifice you made, in separating yourself from our dear friend, at such an interesting moment, ought to be sufficient to set at rest all the jealousies which your absence had produced. I trust, however, that her health has not suffered. She speaks highly of Miss O'R.'s kind and watchful attention; but Miss O'R. can be but a poor substitute for the friend from whom she parted. She has, I suppose, informed

[1] Dr. Everard was a fine-looking handsome man, with something of a princely air about him. Having been educated at Salamanca, he settled at Bordeaux, and remained there until driven out by the Revolution. He then fixed his residence at Ulverstone, in Lancashire, and kept a private school: his pupils being the sons of Catholic gentlemen of rank and fortune. Dr. Everard was held in great respect by all, and had many friends among the Protestant clergy; his school proved a lucrative undertaking, and he was happy in the life he led. When called to Ireland to give his aid to the struggling Church, he did not conceal how much he felt at leaving the home and society so congenial to his tastes. Nothing but an imperious sense of duty could have reconciled him to the change. Having been for some time President of Maynooth, he was named coadjutor of Dr. Bray, whom he eventually succeeded in the See of Cashel. His private fortune enabled him to live independent of support from the archdiocese. He died in March, 1821.—For some of these particulars, see a letter in the *Freeman's Journal*, April 13, 1821.

The number of Salamanca students who attained distinction in the Irish Church is a remarkable fact. Dr. W. J. Fitzpatrick, in his "Life of Dr. Doyle" (p. 192), says: "A high Spanish dignitary having visited the college in 1790, was particularly struck by the demeanour of the Irish students, and broke out in a fervent prediction as to their future distinction in the Church. The prophesy was fulfilled. From 1809 to 1816 the sees of Cashel, Dublin, Tuam, Ossory, Ardagh, and Clogher, were successively filled by the Rev. Messrs. Everard, Murray, Kelly, Marum, Magaurin, and Kernan. And last of all came, in 1819, the 'Professor,' Dr. Curtis himself."

you how rapidly her strength is returning, and I see no reason to doubt it. Much as she may wish to avoid giving pain to her friends, she would not say roundly, 'my cough is gone, and I am quite myself again,' if she did not experience a very material change for the better. May God in his mercy perfect her recovery, and preserve her to the many to whose happiness her valuable life is so essential.

"How delighted I am that your dear Margaret is becoming everything that you wish. I am sure you will have no very insuperable objection to allow her another year's improvement where she is; I hope, however, there is no danger that she will contract an unreasonable attachment to the place, or that all her perfections may be exposed to be lost to the world, concealed from all but the holy daughters of St. Ursula. Believe me, Mary, that the charge which our friend omitted to mention, would not have been considered the most weighty. You give me much pleasure by telling me that you persevere in the discharge of your Christian duties. It is there, my dear child, that you will learn patience under all your trials, and unbounded confidence in that Being who has hitherto so mercifully watched over you. Let nothing separate you from Him. Cling to his altar as your best support, and your frequent and fervent union with Him who delights to strengthen the weak and console the afflicted will be a sure protection against all the efforts of your spiritual enemies.

"Tell me *often* how you are going on, and occupy no more of your paper with those idle apologies about teazing, etc. which may sound, indeed, very finely, but mean nothing. I must be now, for a few weeks, pretty much out of town, but not perhaps exactly for the purpose that you might be supposed to expect. My friend, Doctor Everard, is appointed to the presidentship of Maynooth; but as he cannot possibly make his arrangements so as to be able to leave England for a few weeks, and as the present President retires immediately, I was entreated by the Trustees of the College to take charge of that establishment, until Doctor E.'s arrival, which will be, I hope, some time before the end of next month. I resisted, you may be sure, as long as I could with any kind of propriety, but was at length compelled to submit. I shall, however, have my gig along with me, and can drive into town as often as I please. In consequence of this arrangement Doctor Troy proceeds on his visitation alone.

"Poor Helen has been greatly mortified at not being able to obtain leave to pay her visit to Cork, yet such is the young lady's perfection that she would not even venture to express a wish to her mother on the subject, and all her brother Richard's efforts in her favour were in vain. After scribbling over this, I think you can never again with justice accuse me of reluctance to read a long letter; you may rest assured I shall feel none in reading yours. Celia is quite well; I suppose she will not omit this opportunity of telling you so. She forgives the trick you played on her the day of her profession. Pray for me, dear Mary, and believe me always,

"Your sincerely affectionate friend,
"D. MURRAY."

The gentle Helen mentioned above was one of the Simpson family, who were all great friends of Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien, and had early given Mary Aikenhead a place in their affectionate regard. Helen and her brothers, Richard, Thomas, and Stephen, proved zealous and life-long friends. Stephen, at the time we are now speaking of, had not arrived at man's estate; but he was most attentive and companionable, and often escorted Miss Aikenhead, as he had escorted Miss Lynch

some years earlier, in her walks through Dublin. His delight was to show the sights of the city to his young lady friends.

Meanwhile a great sorrow visited Mary Aikenhead, and cast a gloom over the whole south of Ireland. Dr. MacCarthy, who had not reached his fiftieth year, fell a victim to one of those terrible fevers which constantly swept like a plague over the towns and rural districts of Ireland. His death was worthy of his life. Passing one day through a part of the city, not in his own district, but in which the fever was raging, he was asked to enter a house and see a patient who was at the point of death. A neighbour, knowing the virulence of the disease from which the poor creature suffered, begged of the bishop not to risk his life by going in. "I will go," he answered, "and save that soul." He did all that could be done for the dying man, took the contagion, and, after ten days' illness, died on the 19th June, 1810.

In the following year Mary Aikenhead's friends again induced her to spend some time with them in Dublin. The discussions on the projected foundation of a community of Sisters of Charity now took a more definite and serious form. How dear this undertaking was to Dr. Murray's heart was proved by the time and attention he devoted to the subject at a moment when the general affairs of the diocese would seem to demand all his thoughts, and while the state of public affairs kept the mind of all who cared for the interests of the people and the safety of the Church in a state of constant tension and serious alarm. The Catholics of Dublin, who but a few years ago appeared to be hopelessly sunk in despondence, were now aroused to frenzy by the discussion of the Veto question. The instinct of the people, sharpened by experience and rendered sensitive by constant suffering, was quick to scent the danger lurking in the specious overtures of the government, who sought, by once more holding out hopes of emancipation, to obtain a veto in the appointment of Catholic bishops. To the people the whole intricate question appeared resolvable into the simplest elements:—their rulers were making a desperate effort to bind in fetters the Church they could not destroy; they had already duped the bishops, and were seeking to cajole the court of Rome! Many of the bishops, it is true, in their anxiety to gain emancipation, had listened to the overtures of Pitt and Castlereagh; and the court of Rome being under very great obligations to the British government, would have been willing to yield some minor points. Again, some of the Irish Catholics, and a considerable number of the English, were averse to the discussion of the question, and would have let the statesmen take their way, provided only that those Catholics who with difficulty were acquiring a position of comfort and respectability, were left undisturbed in their pursuit. But the bishops soon perceived the danger; and O'Connell, whose efforts to animate the people into

political vitality by agitating for emancipation had proved only partially successful, now carried all before him with the Veto for a rallying cry. "I am against any arrangement that would compromise my religion" cried the leader: "if Emancipation be offered with the Veto, I would reject it with scorn!" And so also said the multitude. One thing was clear, namely, that Dr. Murray could not, even had he willed it, stand now aloof absorbed in diocesan affairs. For some years to come he had to hold himself ready, at short notice, to undertake journeys to Paris and to Rome, involving an absence of considerable duration from the centre of his dearest duties and interests.

Among the clergy who were most strongly opposed to any compromise of the Veto question was Dr. Betagh. While the agitation was at its height, the venerable Vicar-General, weighed down with years as with a load of honour, was called to his heavenly home. Who would have wished to prolong the days of one whose every nerve had been strained, and whose every faculty had been exerted in the service of the flock? Well had he earned his rest and his reward. But the good Master whom he served had sent him a great joy, even while he toiled along the road fast narrowing to the grave. The Company of Jesus, in whose ranks he had enlisted in early manhood, and whose suppression had been regarded as a quite irretrievable calamity, were now mustering once more for the ceaseless warfare. That the formal restoration of the society would not be much longer delayed, he well knew; and the re-establishment in Ireland of the sons of St. Ignatius at any early date, he believed, might confidently be expected. The first steps towards this re-establishment had in fact been taken. From among his own pupils young men had been selected for this undertaking, and they were finishing their studies and making their novitiate at Palermo. On one of these young men the aged father placed his dearest hopes; and when he felt that his own days could not be much longer extended, he said to those around him, who in their sorrow believed that in losing him they were bereft of all: "I have not long to be with you, but never fear, I am rearing a cock that will crow when I am gone, louder and sweeter for you than ever I did."

Dr. Betagh passed away on the 16th of February, 1811, and a few days later his remains were laid beside his brethren sleeping in the Jesuits' vault in the graveyard adjoining the ancient and once Catholic church of St. Michan. Round the massive tower of St. Michan's so vast an assemblage had never before been gathered. Many a mourner's heart thrilled with emotion on that day, as he thought of all the precious relics St. Michan's soil was keeping for "the morning of the Resurrection:" of all, who, having greatly served the people or greatly suffered for them, were buried there in broad daylight in

presence of a weeping crowd, or secretly carried thither at dead of night and laid in a nameless grave.[1]

Before long the herald of the morning, whom the dying father had announced, made his appearance. Peter Kenny returned to Ireland from the south of Europe, and the people soon found that they had once more amongst them a great apostle. Aided by two of his brother Jesuits, he opened the mission again in St. Michan's parish, and served the Mary's-lane chapel. His preaching drew round the pulpit a crowd of delighted listeners who became ere long disciples. His eloquence differed from that which had for some time prevailed among the orators of Ireland, whether sacred or forensic. It was neither sensational nor grandiloquent. It was calm, well reasoned, irresistible, persuasive. His words dropped right into the heart of the listeners, and they were remembered. Father Kenny's coming to Ireland was always looked on by Dr. Murray as one of the greatest blessings heaven could have bestowed on him in the early days of his episcopacy. The archbishop and the Jesuit father were united by ties of the most intimate friendship, and together they worked, though sometimes in different paths, for the same objects—the advance of religion and the good of the flock.[2]

[1] The antiseptic quality of the soil prevents the decay of human remains in St. Michan's vaults. Among the dead there interred are John and Henry Sheares, Oliver Bond, the Rev. William Jackson : all of '98 celebrity; and it is still a matter of controversy whether this graveyard or that of old Glasnevin is the place where "cold and unhonoured" lie the remains of Robert Emmet. The patriotic Dr. Lucas was buried here with public honours. It is the last resting-place of Archbishop Carpenter, the predecessor of Dr. Troy, in the See of Dublin.

[2] Father Kenny's Life has never been written, or at any rate has never been printed. Short notices of his career are to be met with in books and newspapers; and persons still living can tell many interesting things about him. The following incident of his boyhood was told to us by a person whose father, a coach-builder by trade, had the account from Father Kenny himself. When quite a lad, he was bound as an apprentice to a coach-builder, and occupied in the factory all day. In the evening he attended one of Dr. Betagh's schools. He was not unwilling to learn his lessons, but nothing attracted him so much as public speaking. The sermons he heard on Sundays he used to deliver after his own fashion to his fellow-apprentices on week days. One day as, mounted on a chair, he was preaching a sermon, the master entered the workshop and found him thus engaged with all the men around him. "This will never do," cried the master in a rage, "idling the apprentices! You'll be sure to be at it again. Walk off, now; and never show your face here again." The men began to laugh; but Peter had to depart. He was ashamed to appear before Dr. Betagh, and for three weeks stayed away from school. He was missed. Dr. Betagh sent for him, and asked what had happened between him and his parents that caused him to remain away from the class. "Nothing has happened," said Peter, "between me and my parents; but my master has turned me off;" and he then confessed that he had been *trying to preach a sermon to the men.* "And what were you saying to them?" asked the doctor. "Get up on that chair and preach your sermon again." The lad obeyed; and when Dr. Betagh had heard enough, he said: "Very well; that will do now. But take care you don't stay away from school any more." From that day forth Peter Kenny had a fast friend in Dr. Betagh.

Monsignor Meagher in his "Life of Archbishop Murray," p. 91, has the following interesting passage: "After preliminary studies, first at Carlow, and afterwards at Stony-

Meanwhile Mrs. O'Brien was not idly considering the course of public events, or waiting for the establishment of a new order to relieve the pressing wants of the destitute poor. Her work of predilection was the saving of the young from ignorance and danger; and now that the community at Harold's-cross had got safely sheltered under their roof a goodly number of orphan girls, she became all the more anxious to try and save some others from the snares of evil. She was supported in this undertaking by her sister Mrs. Sherlock, Mrs. Michael Sweetman, Mrs. Scully, Miss Dease, and other friends. A house was taken in Ash-street, near the Coombe, and a number of poor girls of good character and unprotected having been selected as the first inmates, the work of the Refuge began, under the patronage of Dr. Blake, afterwards Bishop of Dromore. Mrs. O'Brien was indefatigable in her care of the new institution; and Mary Aikenhead, who often accompanied her to Ash-street, and helped in the work, entered heartily into every project and every detail connected with it. It was a settled matter that the Refuge should be given into the care of the Sisters of Charity as soon as the future community should be able to undertake its management. This gave an additional interest to the work; and the two friends had the pleasure of forecasting its future good fortune, while earnestly labouring to secure its present existence.

All this time Dr. Murray was continually occupied about the

hurst, he (Peter Kenny) repaired in company of his young associates to Sicily, and prosecuted his college course with distinction in the convent of his order at Palermo. During his stay in that island, it was occupied by the friendly troops of Great Britain, who defended it for the king of Naples against the French, who had seized upon the continental possessions of that monarch, and obliged him to take refuge in his Sicilian capital. At the same time Pope Pius VII. was held by Buonaparte a captive at Rome. A bold attempt to liberate him was determined on, in which Father Kenny was selected to act an important part. The first intimation he received of the projected enterprise reached him in an order from his superiors, to be ready in an hour to sail in an English ship of war, which was to enter Civita Vecchia and receive the Pope, to whom Father Kenny was to act as interpreter, and accompany him in his voyage to Palermo. Of course he was but too proud to lend his aid to such a project. The undertaking, however, was suddenly abandoned."

This curious incident we may supplement with the following, which we have from private and reliable sources :—"The frigate commanded by the then Captain (afterwards Admiral) Cockburn, lay off the Pontifical shore with Father Kenny, who remained on board while his companion, Padre Angiolino, went to Rome, saw Cardinal Pacca, and received from him the answer of Pius VII. expressive of his thanks to the British Government, which offered him an asylum in England; but at the same time stating his conviction that it was his duty under the existing circumstances not to abandon his flock, even though the loss of liberty or of life itself were to be the consequence. Captain Cockburn was charmed with both his Jesuit guests, as he afterwards repeatedly declared, bantering occasionally his brother officers by observing to them that he alone could boast of the honour of having received the orders of his Sovereign to hold himself and his ship at the orders of two Jesuits, and for the purpose of carrying off a Pope to England. It was said that it was the intention of the British Government to rent Burton Constable, in Holderness, for the residence of His Holiness while in England.

The best account we have met with of Father Kenny is contained in a series of papers on the Jesuits in Ireland, contributed to the *Limerick Reporter* in 1868-9.

subject of the new foundation. That the work was to be begun, and before long, was a settled affair; but Mary could not help wondering how it was that the efficient superior, on whom so much would depend, had not yet appeared. At last one day, to her unspeakable amazement, she learned that it was she herself who was to head the undertaking. Naturally timid, extremely averse from putting herself forward in any way, and entertaining but a poor opinion of her own abilities, she at first could not believe that it had entered into anyone's head to place her in such a position; and when there could be no longer a doubt as to the intentions of Dr. Murray on this point, her courage failed and she was filled with consternation. She absolutely refused to lend herself to such an arrangement, at least until she should have laid open, by a carefully prepared general confession, her whole soul to Dr. Murray. Possibly she had a strong hope that when the archbishop knew her better he would change his mind, or at any rate not insist on pressing such a grievous responsibility on her. This hope, if entertained, was destined to be disappointed. Dr. Murray calmed her fears, gave her much comfort, and assured her most solemnly that it was God's will the foundation should be made, and that she was the instrument chosen by Providence for the work. Dr. Everard, now president of the College of Maynooth, who was deeply interested in the undertaking and urged its speedy commencement, likewise cheered and encouraged her. Finally, she gave an unreserved consent, and bound herself to make arrangements for leaving Cork the earliest moment she could do so without injustice to her family. She did not, however, cease to feel the trial of having to take the leadership, where she had hoped to follow a good guide. For a long time, indeed, it weighed heavily on her, and damped the natural cheerfulness of her disposition.

The more she considered the gravity of the circumstances, the more uneasy did she become at the prospect of commencing such an undertaking without having previously been instructed in the spirit and trained to the duties of religious life. She therefore besought Dr. Murray to obtain for her the advantage of making a regular noviceship in an institute where the duties resembled, in some degree, those proposed to be carried out in the new foundation; or, if this could not be done, she prayed that at least she might be thoroughly grounded in the theory and practice of religious life: the exterior occupation being a matter of secondary importance. The reasonableness of this request was fully allowed. After much consideration, and much earnest prayer, the convent of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Micklegate Bar, York,[1] was thought to come

[1] "The most ancient religious house founded, and always remaining in England, and long the only convent in the country, is the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary at York, which began in 1686."—"Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers." First Series, p. 4.

nearer than any other to what was required, as the nuns made no vow of enclosure, and went out to visit the sick. An application was therefore made to Mrs. Coyney, the superior, from whom in due course Dr. Murray received a kind reply, not only acceding to his wishes, but promising a cordial welcome to Miss Aikenhead and the lady who should accompany her. The permission of the Right Rev. Dr. Wilson, Vicar-Apostolic of the Northern District, the ecclesiastical superior of the community was also obtained. Miss Catherine Chamberlain of Leixlip, in the county of Dublin, was, according to the original arrangement, to accompany Mary Aikenhead to York, and go through the noviceship at the same time with her. But she became ill shortly before the date fixed for departure, and another lady, Miss Alicia Walsh was substituted in her place.

Miss Walsh was about fourteen years older than her companion, having been born on the 25th June, 1773. Her father was a gentleman of considerable property, and resided in the immediate vicinity of Naul, a village in the county of Dublin, situated on the borders of Meath in the midst of a remarkably picturesque country. Mr. Walsh was a man of high principle, and of a generous, hospitable disposition. His wife was niece to Mr. George Taaffe of Smarmore Castle. The Taaffes, in consequence of their fidelity to James II., were despoiled of their property in the Williamite wars ; but George Taaffe's son, John, having married his cousin, Miss Taaffe of the county of Meath, a very rich heiress, purchased back Smarmore, the ancient residence of his ancestors. Mr. Walsh was also allied to the family of Caddell of Harbourstown, county of Meath. In the year 1798, Mr. Walsh, though he took no active part in the insurrectionary movement, suffered, nevertheless, like many other Catholics the destruction of his property, which was pillaged and burned by the Royalist soldiery. Mrs. Walsh had died a short time before these disasters, and her husband did not long survive them. At his death the family became dispersed, and its members were reduced to comparative obscurity. Alicia, the second daughter, was small in figure and handsome in face : her countenance was so expressive of amiability and intelligence that people found her charming even at first sight. She had a great taste for reading and indulged in it freely, so that being acquainted with works of standard excellence, as well as with the lighter literature of the day, her mind was richly stored and her conversation was most interesting. Her love of poetry and of the beautiful in nature, made her girlhood happy in the lovely glen of Naul, with its rocks and ruins, its winding rivulet and flashing cascades ; and her delight was to make her poetic meditations among the grass-grown graves of the churchyard, while listening to the wild music of an Æolian harp which she had hung in the trees. In disposition she was warm and generous in the highest degree ; her love of the poor was almost romantic in its

tenderness, and her patriotism was enthusiastic. During the rebellion of 1798, she went from prison to prison at much personal risk, to carry messages from friends, or to console the inmates who were the objects of her deepest sympathy. Some of her nearest and dearest relatives suffered greatly, not only from the confiscation of their property and unjust oppression, but also from the barbarous bodily tortures which, at that period, were commonly inflicted at the will of a licentious soldiery. One of her friends, a young man of exemplary life, was stripped to the waist, tied to a cart, and dragged through the streets of Drogheda, his inhuman executioners flogging him all the way, until at last he fainted under their hands, and was consigned to a prison cell. The first intimation his mother received of the occurrence that had taken place was a demand for old linen to dress her son's back, which was one hideous wound.

In the family of a near neighbour at Naul, a circumstance occurred equally characteristic of the time. A young lady was engaged to be married to a gentleman, who, having been connected with the insurgents in 1798, was obliged to fly from his home. He took refuge in the house of his intended brother-in-law, who had been forced to join a corps of Yeomanry. The fugitive's track was discovered, the Yeomanry were called out, and he, having again taken to flight, was overtaken at a village near Dublin, and hanged from a post in the street by the young man from whose house he had just escaped and who dared not shirk the duty. The poor rebel's mother never learned the fate that had befallen her son. She was persuaded that he had gone abroad; and up to her death she continued making shirts and knitting stockings, which were sent, as she supposed, in parcels to the refugee in a distant land.

Events like these made so deep an impression on Alicia's sensitive nature that she never could trust herself to speak of them; and if in the course of conversation any allusion was made to the horrors of that era, the speaker was immediately hushed. In her presence, at any rate, people *were* "afraid to speak of ninety-eight." We cannot say when or how it was that Miss Walsh first heard of Dr. Murray's project. All we know is that the idea of Sisters of Charity being established in Ireland excited her deepest interest, and that she offered herself to the archbishop to accompany Miss Aikenhead to York, go through the noviceship, and join the new congregation.

All that remained now for Mary Aikenhead to do was the arrangement of family affairs in Cork. Her sisters Anne and Margaret had left the convent school. Though young in years they were gifted with good sense, and might be supposed able to take care of themselves; and as they were in the midst of a large family connexion, including very near relatives, Mary could have no scruple of conscience in leaving them in order to follow the voice that called her to new

duties in another sphere. But it was not in nature that the parting could be without a pang. Possibly she now for the first time realised how great was the sacrifice she made in leaving for ever those who were so dear to her, and who had hitherto been so dependent on her care. Nor could she pronounce without emotion a final farewell to the troop of friends who had surrounded her in the old home; to the poor whom she had loved and served; to the scenes of peaceful beauty amidst which she had grown to womanhood—the sunny hills, the sheltering woods, the meadows skirted by the silver tide. The great unknown future lay before her; and, bidding adieu to the pleasant city by the Lee, she took the first step on the untravelled way, with a brave heart though with tearful eyes, on Trinity Sunday, the 24th of May, in the year 1812.

END OF BOOK I.

# BOOK II.

# Book II.

1812—1833.

## CHAPTER I.

NOVITIATE AT YORK—DR. MURRAY IN ROME—RESTORATION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

ARCHBISHOP MURRAY was of too fatherly a nature to allow his dear friends and spiritual children to journey alone into a strange country. He took them under his own special care, and went with them to York, where the travellers arrived on the 6th of June, 1812—the anniversary of the happy day on which Mary Aikenhead had been received into the Catholic Church. Having passed a few days in the ancient episcopal city, and given the postulants, in whom such hopes were centred, into the care of the good nuns at Micklegate Bar, he went to Ulverston to see his friend Dr. Everard, who, in consequence of ill health, had been obliged to discontinue for a while his duties at Maynooth. From Ulverston, Dr. Murray wrote the following pleasant and affectionate letter to his young friend :—

"*Ulverston, 13th June*, 1812.

"Ardently as I wish you to acquire an interior spirit, and a total disengagement from the world, you see, my dear Mary, that I am determined your solitude shall not remain quite undisturbed, nor your meditations uninterrupted. Perhaps, however, to glide gently into retirement would be preferable to an abrupt and rapid transition, and that occasional remembrances of the world will, now that your views are fixed on more exalted scenes, only tend to impress you more deeply with the conviction of its insignificance. At all events, I can hardly think that you have yet had time to arrive at a holy state of total indifference for all whom you left behind you struggling in the world. I avail myself, therefore, of an interval of leisure to obtrude myself on your notice, and to tell you that I arrived here in perfect safety on Wednesday, after passing through some amusing scenes on the way.

"On Monday, to be sure, I had some little difficulties to encounter. I was stuffed into a narrow carriage, with five huge natives of Yorkshire ; you may guess my situation was not quite a paradise. I had, however,

the comfort and edification of hearing all the excellences of good feeding and all the varieties of tasteful cookery discussed in the most elegant and classic language as we went along. One gentleman told us exultingly that he had, in company with another worthy compeer, eaten on one occasion twenty-three poached eggs, as much rashers as could be cut off a thirty pound ham, and two or three dishes of spinach! But notwithstanding these advantages, I was rejoiced when I saw the smoke of Manchester. On the next day I was more at my ease; I had a roomy coach, no crowd, and more agreeable company. I did not, however, experience much Irish hospitality—for one lady, without ever considering the wants of others, occasionally drew from her pocket a bottle (none of your small-sized ones either), which she most devoutly applied to her lips, and which, she said, contained rum and water, just made slender to render it agreeable, for that indeed nature required some support; but whether it was slender or otherwise we had no means of ascertaining further than the lady's word could go for the purpose, for she never seemed to think of sending round the jorum.

"I was obliged to stop at Lancaster till a late hour the next day, in order to wait for the retiring of the tide, after which I proceeded to Ulverston, which I reached in the evening, and where, I need not tell you, I met with such a reception as the warmest friendship could suggest. I found Dr. Everard a good deal emaciated by illness, but now recovering gradually, though not, I think, in a sufficient degree to justify him in immediately resuming the government of Maynooth. I think it is better for him to remain quiet and nurse his constitution for a little while, after which, I trust, he will return to us with renewed vigour. He expects some advantage from the waters of Harrowgate, to which place he intends to go in a short time, in which case he will certainly pay you and Miss Walsh a visit. He desires me to assure you both of his most fervent wishes for your happiness, and for the success of the undertaking in which you are engaged, and which he has long had deeply at heart. I am getting a sketch drawn of his little chapel, which may possibly serve as a guide for the formation of ours.

"I am most anxious for news from Ireland, but hardly expect any until I return. I purpose leaving this before the end of next week. If you have heard anything from beyond the channel, let me know it by return of post, and possibly your letter may overtake me here. At all events, in about a week address to me to Ireland a detailed account of how you are going on, and of your present state of feeling. Disguise nothing. You know, my dear child, I am now more than ever interested for your happiness; a new link binds us together in more indissoluble friendship. Assure Miss Walsh of my perfect esteem, and convey to her my most earnest wishes for her temporal and eternal welfare. Say everything that is kind and respectful to Mrs. Coyney. Assure her again that there were particular circumstances which rendered it quite impossible to accede to her request on last Sunday. Give my best regards to the little Murrays, and my other acquaintances in your house, and believe me unalterably,

"Your sincere friend,
"D. M."

Mary Aikenhead's mind was now turned with all its energy and all its faculties to the one subject—the study of the principles of the religious life and the practice of its duties. Every moment of her time was occupied in one way or another bearing on the special work in view. She copied spiritual papers, translated

books, and hoarded every document which seemed likely to aid her in her future station. Mother Mary Austin Chalmers, the mistress of novices, understood her fully, gave her every help, and won her lasting gratitude and affection. There could be but one opinion of the future foundress; the pious community recognised in her a noble mind and a large generous heart; but during her stay in York she hardly recovered her natural elasticity, the sense of responsibility weighed on her spirits, and she was by no means so universal a favourite as her cheerful, light-hearted companion, Alicia Walsh. The aspirants so kindly received into the convent at York never assumed the dress of the institute, but wore the plain black gown, the cap and veil of the postulant. They took, however, with permission, the religious names which they bore till death, and were called, respectively, Sister Mary Augustine and Sister Mary Catherine: Mary Aikenhead choosing the name of the great Doctor of the Western Church, whose ardent character had a particular attraction for her, and whose writings were, even in those early days, the nourishment for soul and intellect in which she most delighted; while Miss Walsh took the name of the Saint of Siena, to whom she had a special devotion, and whose charity for the sick and the afflicted, for poor prisoners, and sinners led astray, she always strove to imitate.[1]

Dr. Everard paid his visit to the York Convent in due course, and he took that opportunity of introducing to Sister Augustine a French Jesuit named Fontaine, who had not returned to France after the suppression of the Society, and was experienced in the direction of religious communities. This religious had in his possession some manuscript documents collected by Father Strickland of the Society of Jesus, which were intended as regulations for a community to be established in London among the French refugees, under the title of "Les Dames du Saint Esprit." These he gave Sister Augustine to study. She read the papers carefully, but thought the rules fell far short of the York rule, her appreciation of which daily increased from finding the spiritual advantages its practice brought to her own soul. Moreover, she saw nothing in the rule she was following that could clash with the exterior duties of charity which she had in view for the new institute.

After Dr. Murray's return to Dublin, Sister Augustine wrote to him her opinion on the different matters he had recommended to her consideration. She did not conceal from him that she had special need of his support under the pressure of trial: for as time went on she felt more reluctant than ever to accept the heavy responsibility that was

[1] Of the many St. Catherines, the Saint of Siena is considered the *Irish St. Catherine*. The prevalence of the name, with its variations, Kate, Kathleen, Kitty, &c., is remarkable in Ireland. After St. Brigid, the favourite female saints are St. Catherine and St. Teresa.

more than likely to devolve on her. Having freely expressed what she felt to her true father and friend, she received from him the following reply:—

"*Dublin, 26th January*, 1813.

"It gives me very particular pleasure to be enabled, before leaving town, to acknowledge my dear friend's acceptable letter, which reached me three days ago at Maynooth. I share in all your anxieties, but my apprehensions are not as lively as yours. The work in which you are preparing to engage is the work of God, and He is able to make it prosper. It would certainly fail if it were to rest upon human resources. He delights to employ the feeblest instruments for the greatest purposes; that human wisdom may cease to glory, and that all may bow down before Him, as the sole author and bestower of every good. Distrust yourself, trust in Him; and you cannot fail. He in whose hand the moistened clay could restore sight to the blind, can make his frail imperfect servant, if she be little in her own eyes, the powerful instrument of extending his glory. You say you expect no decided advice from me. In this you shall be disappointed. The time when it might have been prudent to withhold it is, I think, now past. My decided advice now is to fix your eyes and heart and confidence on God, and to proceed; to rejoice in the hope that our dear Lord has prepared for you the incomparable blessing of associating you with Himself for the attainment of the salvation of his creatures; to offer yourself to Him cheerfully, and without reserve to receive whatever portion of His cross He chooses to impose on you in the execution of this divine work. He seems to have prepared the way for it by means beyond the reach of human foresight, and there does not seem to me to be any reasonable grounds for doubting that He wills the accomplishment of a work which He so evidently appears to have begun.

"I have not yet been able to procure a copy of your constitutions. Dr. Moylan's papers were so tossed in their removal to the new house, that he has not yet been able to lay his hand on them; he will, however, continue the search, and hopes to find them. Lest he should not be able to procure them, I have applied for them elsewhere. Do not, however, be discouraged; if they do not arrive as soon as we could wish, provisional rules, as much as possible in their spirit, shall, if necessary, be prepared. I do not despair of being able to open a communication with your Sisters in France, by means of Abbé Le Grand of the Congregation of the Mission. Dr. Troy also has written to Rome to obtain the sanction of whatever authorities his Holiness has left there.

"The unexpected coldness which you say you experience from some branches of your family is, perhaps, wisely ordained by Divine Providence to wean you more perfectly from all that is in the world, and to enable you to give yourself with entire disengagement of heart to the work of God. In the latter verses of the ninth chapter of St. Luke you will find useful lessons on this subject. Fond and frequent intercourse with your worldly connections would be a great drawback on the perfection of your sacrifice; it would not indeed be compatible with the object you have in view. When I tell you that I am now reading the "Life of St. Vincent de Paul," you will not be surprised at my reminding you that *your family in future are to be the poor of Jesus Christ.* Whatever time can be spared from the duties which charity will claim for them, should be spent, if possible, in total seclusion from the world; in earnest, persevering endeavours to preserve uninterrupted that interior communication with heaven which will be necessary to sanctify your outward labours and to prevent the spirit of fervour from decaying and perishing.

"You seem to dread very much even the possible danger of being Superior. The appointment of a Superior is yet in the hands of God. I hope He will guide the choice. Allow me, however, to remark that there may be sometimes as much humility in accepting an office as in rejecting it. Wherever there is true humility there is no obstinate self-will. Whatever share of self-will you may still possess, must be left behind you in the world; the moment you pass the threshold of religion you become the humble child of obedience. In this humble obedience you possess the certain means of accomplishing the will of God: without it you must certainly want the true spirit of religion. What I say to you I say to your dear companion and fellow-labourer, to whom I beg you will communicate the fervent wishes that I feel for her happiness. Have the goodness to inquire of her in my name, if she have met with any pecuniary disappointment. I am grateful for Miss Heavy's remembrance, and shall not forget her request; I hope she will repay me in a similar way. Say everything that is respectful for me to Rev. Mother and all her valued community. Their prayers will, I hope, draw down a blessing on our little work. Remember me also to the little nieces with whose improvement I am much gratified. I saw your dearest friend, Anna Maria, to-day, and Cecilia yesterday: they are both well. I had a letter from Dr. Everard a few days ago: his health is improving, but he does not yet speak of coming to Ireland.

"Whenever you find it convenient need I tell you to communicate with entire liberty your hopes and fears and anxieties to

"Your sincere friend,

"D. M.

"Since writing the within, I have been applied to by Mr. Corballis to solicit places in the Bar-school for two of his daughters, the elder about twelve years of age, the younger about eleven. I request you will have the goodness to transact the commission for me with Rev. Mother, and to inform me, as soon as convenient, of the success of our application. Mr. and Mrs. Corballis are extremely anxious to have the young ladies sent as soon as possible, and I must confess that I am interested for them.

"Anna Maria desires me to say that you need not puzzle yourself any more about the vestments, as they are to be home manufacture.

The dread of being named Superior of the new congregation was not the only thought that disturbed Sister Mary Augustine during her noviceship. She was much troubled about her sisters, whom she had left, as she now feared, without sufficient protection considering their youth and inexperience, and was anxious about her brother, St. John. They were not, it appeared, managing money matters very well, and she began to fear they might find themselves in difficulties before long. This source of anxiety was also laid open to the wise counsellor and true friend in a letter written after the receipt of the communication given above. The following is Dr. Murray's kind and sympathetic answer:—

"*Dublin, 10th April*, 1813.

"Dear Mary,

"Though I am just going out of town, I must first snatch a moment to repeat my assurances (though such a repetition can be hardly necessary) of the large share I must ever have in all your anxieties. I think the present source of uneasiness has made a greater impression on your feelings than it should have done. With regard to the present deficiency in

money matters you need not make yourself at all unhappy as far as regards yourself: with regard to others, too, it may serve as a lesson of future economy. I would not, however, be understood to lean too heavily on the poor girls. This year has been most unfavourable for housekeeping, and I am not at all surprised at the result, when I reflect on the long family they have had to support. I always thought it imprudent to keep up that establishment, and I believe if you were with them yourself, considering the advance which has taken place in the price of many necessary articles of consumption, you would find it expedient to alter your plan. Considering every circumstance, it would not, in my opinion, be advisable that they should attempt longer to keep up that expensive establishment. They might go to some respectable boarding-house either in Cork or Dublin, and whatever surplus should remain of their little income, might be applied, if they thought proper, to assist the other branches of the family.

"It would be rather hard that they should expect that you would sacrifice your future prospects in order to go and take care of them, at a time when they ought to be able to take care of themselves. I am far, however, from reprimanding the just anxiety you feel for their happiness, and I take this opportunity of informing you that what I said on a late occasion regarding your *family*, was in reality not intended for you, but was levelled against the excessive attachment which we thought was discoverable in your companion for some of her worldly connections. And if after all you should, on reflection, think your presence necessary at home, I beg, my dear child, that you will not by any step you have already taken, consider yourself pledged to proceed in your present undertaking. I do not by any means think that the difficulties which you mention ought to make you alter your determination if you be otherwise anxious to proceed: they were foreseen in a great measure from the beginning, and it is possible that even were you at home they might not be wholly avoided.

"I will leave room for our friend to add a line, and will only request you to present my best respects to reverend mother and all your valued community. You will observe that I have been obliged to write this in haste.

"Yours most sincerely,

"D. MURRAY.

"P. S.—It would be a comfort to me to hear from you soon."

The last available page of the large, gilt-edged sheet on which the above was written, Mrs. O'Brien filled up with entreaties to her dearest Mary not to injure her health by her uneasiness with regard to what was going on in Cork; suggesting that Anne and Margaret might come to live in Dublin, and reminding her that their staying in Cork would be of little use to St. John.

Poor Sister Catherine, as we gather from the above letter, could not, any more than Sister Augustine, banish from her thoughts the friends she had left behind in Ireland, or the relatives who no doubt greatly missed the companionship of one so genial and so reliable. However she was free from one of the troubles her companion had to bear: her mind did not weary itself with forecasting the weight she might one day have to endure as the Superior of a house or a congregation. Possibly her greater experience of life stood her in good stead, for apprehension effects the young more vividly than the mature in years. And for the rest she was not threatened with an immediate call to head a difficult and untried enterprise.

When the year's novitiate drew nearly to a close the sisters became extremely anxious to have their time of preparation prolonged, and besought Dr. Murray to grant them another twelve months' probation. The archbishop agreed to this; and in the course of the second year he made a journey to York, bringing with him a young lady, a Miss Fitzgerald of the county of Louth, who intended to join the future Sisters of Charity, but who, during her first retreat, changed her mind and decided on remaining at York. During this visit the several points suggested by the study of the two rules were fully discussed. Dr. Murray entirely coincided in the opinion the sisters had formed of the rule followed at York, which had been approved by Pope Clement XI., and called "The Rule of the English Virgins." At his request Mrs. Coyney, the Superior, kindly allowed Sister Mary Augustine to make a copy of the rule, and also of the constitutions.

The sisters continued their earnest studies, and their no less assiduous practice of the religious life, on the understanding that when the second year was ended they should return to Ireland. As that term drew near, Sister Mary Augustine felt more than ever convinced that she was not ready for the work before her. It would have seemed useless to entreat for a longer extension of time; but, like St. Scholastica, she turned to God in silent prayer, and obtained her desire. In the spring of 1814, the extraordinary events which changed the face of Europe produced an effect even in Ireland, and rendered it impossible for Dr. Murray to undertake just then the projected foundation. The question of the Veto was now more urgent than ever, and Dr. Murray was summoned to Rome to co-operate with Bishop Milner in the endeavour to obtain a satisfactory settlement of the difficulty.

Mrs. Coyney offered to keep the Irish sisters until Dr. Murray should return, and it was hoped that when the Continent would be open, access might be had to the General of the Lazarites with a view of obtaining from him the constitutions of the Sisters of Charity founded by St. Vincent de Paul. Before setting out on his long journey Dr. Murray wrote the following letter to Mrs. Coyney:—

"*Dublin, 13th April*, 1814.

"Dear Rev. Mother,

"Though I have reason to hope, from the present posture of affairs in France, that I shall soon be in the possession of a copy of the constitutions of the Sisters of Charity, I think it right in the meantime to transmit to you the preceding outline of their plan of life. Dr. Milner had the kindness to transcribe it with his own hand from Collet's "Life of St. Vincent de Paul," and our dear friend, as you will perceive by the handwriting, has saved me the trouble of copying it. Even general as it is we must, under our present circumstances, deem it an acquisition; it will be a source of comfort and instruction to our pious sisters; and I trust that, with the addition of such of your rules and customs as you and Mother Austin would have the kindness to point out, it will be abundantly sufficient for the commencement of their proposed work. It would be most desirable that

they should have an exact plan of life, which should govern them from the first hour of their arrival in this country; and I am quite certain that any that would be formed under your inspection, would meet with the approbation of Dr. Troy and myself. The time being now near for the commencement of the work, it is natural that my anxiety should increase regarding the immediate preparations which shall be necessary for it, one of which is of course a regular plan of life. As, however, I am not immediately acquainted with the rules and customs under which the sisters live, and under which, as far as it is compatible with their object, they should endeavour to live always, I must deem myself very incompetent to form such a plan. I am consoled, however, by reflecting that they are still near the sources whence they have derived so many blessings, and that the charity in which they have shared so largely, instead of being exhausted, seems to increase in proportion to the demands which are made on it.

"Fanny Ball has sanguine expectations that she will be able to accomplish her purpose. She means to write a letter to you offering herself as a candidate for your holy Institute, and hopes, though with great difficulty, to obtain her mother's consent, unfettered by any restriction to set it off. I cannot give up the hope of seeing a house of your holy Institute established in this country, and I trust that this little treasure which we are sending you, may give us some colour of claim to that blessing, and eventually facilitate the means of accomplishing it. With ardent wishes for the happiness individually and collectively of your valued community, I remain, dear Rev. Mother,

"Your obt. servant in Christ,
"D. MURRAY."

Miss Fanny Ball eventually succeeded in obtaining her desire. She entered the York Convent, and thus took the first step in a remarkable and eminent career which led on to the establishment in Ireland of the Institute generally known as the Loretto Order.

Dr. Murray, having governed Maynooth for some time—Father Kenny being vice-president—resigned that office some months before he left for Rome, and was succeeded by Dr. Crotty, afterwards Bishop of Cloyne and Ross. His Holiness Pope Pius VII. had re-entered Rome, after his long captivity, on the 24th of May; and about a month later Dr. Murray arrived to find his friend and brother-delegate, Bishop Milner, already established at his favourite quarters, the Convent of St. John and St. Paul on the Cælian Hill. The prelates were well received in Rome, and had many audiences of His Holiness. Hopes were entertained that the Veto question would be ere long set at rest for ever. But fears had their day as well as hopes, and after a stay of many months in the Eternal City, the delegates had not succeeded in accomplishing anything that could be considered highly satisfactory.

Dr. Murray, however, had one great joy while in Rome. The Bull for the restoration of the Society of Jesus was published on the 7th of August, 1814; and at a splendid function in the Gesu—the Pope celebrating Mass at the altar of St. Ignatius in the presence of the Sacred College and of the Jesuit Fathers assembled from many lands

—the formal re-establishment of the society was proclaimed. Dr. Murray and Dr. Milner were the only strangers in the Gesu on that memorable occasion. The Irish Jesuits present were Fathers Esmond, St. Leger, Aylmer, Butler, and Farley: all of whom had, like Father Kenny, made their novitiate at Palermo in preparation for their life-long labours in Ireland. Father Kenny, whose connexion with Maynooth had ceased on Dr. Murray's retirement from the presidental chair, was at this time anxiously engaged at home in establishing the Clongowes Wood College. Dr. Murray built, as already said, many a hope for the future of the diocese on Father Kenny and the labours of the Society to which that father belonged; and this festival at the Gesu was a memorable day in his calendar as well as in the history of the Church.

All this time he was far from forgetting his friends at York or the future foundation. He had many opportunities of consulting with his friend Dr. Milner on the subject; and he obtained from the authorities at Rome certain powers and privileges calculated to smooth the difficulties which were certain to attend the establishment of the projected institute. In the month of December, being in Paris on his way home, he had an interview with the General of the Lazarites, and wrote the following account of it to Sister Mary Augustine and Sister Mary Catherine:—

"*Paris. Hotel d'Orleans.*
"*Rue des Petits Augustins. No.* 17.
"31*st Dec.*, 1814.

"Dear Daughters in Jesus Christ,

"My continued silence regarding your affairs, particularly for the last few weeks, must have appeared strange and unaccountable, and I fear that your charity has had a difficult task to save it from the imputation of unkindness. But how unfavourable soever appearances may stand against me, I can assure you with great truth that neither your own individual happiness, nor the great work for which you are preparing, was ever long absent from my thoughts; nor ever thought of without a lively interest. But I really could not bring myself to trifle with your feelings by mentioning a subject on which so large a portion of your happiness hinges, until I could state, with some degree of certainty, the means on which I could count for the due accomplishment of our object. On my arrival here I met with much unexpected delay. The Superior-General of St. Lazar was absent, and I could find no one who could supply his place. To the sisters, who by means of the late government were withdrawn from his jurisdiction, I did not wish to apply, as the Decree which I had obtained at Rome for our little establishment connects us with the Congregation in its original state, such as it was founded by St. Vincent de Paul. I therefore thought it better to wait for his return, particularly as I had not a prospect of being able to leave Paris immediately. I was at that time strongly inclined to your coming to Paris, that you might see how the work is conducted here. On conversing with the Superior-General, I found that that plan would be objectionable, or perhaps impracticable, and that our only plan was to take over French Sisters to form the establishment. On proposing to him a second time the practicability of your coming here, he said he would con-

sult with the sisters whom he designed for our foundation, and they had not yet arrived in town. After all due deliberation it was thought advisable to commence the establishment immediately in Ireland, for which purpose he offered three sisters, some of whom he had designed for confidential situations here. He has been really most kind, and shown himself most anxious to promote our object, about which he has taken a great deal of trouble. He has just handed me the accompanying sketch of an agreement which he proposes being entered into. I hasten to transmit it to you, and until I receive your answer, I will neither approve nor reject it. You perceive he seems to expect that the establishment will soon be multiplied and spread over the country. I objected particularly to the clause which required three French sisters to be *always* in Ireland: but this he said was by all means necessary for the preservation of unity throughout the whole family, for corresponding with the Superior-General, and guaranteeing the continuance of the discipline and spirit of St. Vincent in the Order. The same rule obtains in Russia, Poland, and Spain. Of Poland I am certain, but not so much so of the others.

"I now require of you as a matter of duty to give me your opinions on what is best to be done. Recommend it to God, communicate with each other and with the Rev. Mother, and anyone else you please, and then give me your sentiments either separately or together, as *speedily as possible*. If we agree that the machinery here proposed would be too cumbrous, it would be easy to apply to Rome to place the establishment (as some of them here are) under the entire jurisdiction of the bishop. If the rule, such as St. Vincent established it, be preferable, are we to accept these terms? or are we to ask for others? If these be accepted I will take the sisters with me and make York my way home.

"A thousand remembrances and good wishes to all our dear friends, whose prayers I solicit.

"D Murray."

On receiving the document referred to in the above letter and carefully studying its import, Sister Mary Augustine was greatly perplexed Some of the conditions proposed would, she perceived, be difficult of fulfilment, while others she believed to be quite impracticable, considering the situation Ireland was placed in at that time. With regard to herself personally she felt a disappointment at finding that the happiness she had looked forward to of an entire and irrevocable consecration of herself to God, was after all to end in yearly vows; and she dreaded that in consequence of this arrangement the future would still be uncertain and insecure. She went at once to Mother Mary Austin Chalmers, the Mistress of Novices, on whose judgment she could thoroughly rely, and whose deep interest in the new foundation she was well aware of, and poured forth into the good Mother's bosom all her anxieties. Mother Austin and the superior saw the matter entirely as she did, but for her greater trial and merit they did not give her the comfort of knowing that they coincided in her views. They could not help admiring the ardent piety and sound judgment of their novice, but they contented themselves with merely exhorting her to continue to implore the guidance of heaven, saying that the undertaking was so manifestly the work of God, that

she might surely rely on being led by Him, though for a time she might not quite see her way. Sister Mary Augustine's great resource at all times was prayer, and now she begged that the community would join in an earnest appeal to heaven by the recital of a little prayer to which she had much devotion. Mother Austin assured her that any prayer she chose should, at whatsoever cost, be said during nine days. Sister Mary Augustine asked for the three last petitions of the Litany of Divine Providence; her good mistress replied that the entire litany should be said; and orders were given for its daily recital until the Irish sisters should leave York.

The more earnestly she besought heaven for guidance the more clearly did Sister Mary Augustine perceive that the rules of the York institute were preferable to those which had lately been proposed to her consideration. She had little difficulty in expressing her opinion and her feelings on the subject to Dr. Murray, for she understood from the tone of his letter that he was not prepossessed in favour of the *projet d'accord*. Sister Mary Catherine's views were identical with hers, and a joint letter forwarded to Paris, drew from Dr. Murray the following reply:—

"Sisters Mary Austin and Mary Catherine,

"Dear Daughters in Jesus Christ,

"Your most valued letter of the 7th ult. reached me in due course. The sentiments which it contains are those which I expected from you. The *Project d'accord* which I sent you had not my approbation: I merely presented it because I thought it due to your feelings to make you acquainted with the conditions which were proposed. In rejecting them you have entirely coincided with my opinion. Anxious as I am that this most valuable establishment should be formed amongst us, I could hardly consent to conditions which would most seriously embarrass its operation, and that too without any adequate advantage to compensate for the unavoidable inconveniences which would thence arise. I will send you by the first opportunity the constitutions of the Sisters of Charity. I would wish most earnestly that you should spend a few months in one of the houses of the Sisters of Charity in Paris. This, however, I fear is not at this moment possible. In a short time I hope to have a final answer on this head.

"In the meantime, if dear Rev. Mother, whose advice I most earnestly desire you to solicit, should deem it advisable to commence the good work which we have in view, and if on mature deliberation we should agree that foreign aid is not necessary for the formation of the subjects who are to be engaged in it, I must inform you that we have from the See of Rome all the requisite powers for commencing the establishment. The time which you have passed at York is approved of as a novitiate for our intended institution. The period of five years' probation required by our constitutions is limited to two years, until we shall have five professed sisters, and the Archbishop of Dublin is authorised to receive your vows. It is true that in the Decree there is a clause which says that this is to be 'without prejudice to the rights in any case belonging to the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission;' but there will be no difficulty whatever in having the clause expunged on the first application to Rome, if it be deemed expedient that we should form a society *similar* to that established by St.

Vincent, but *not dependent* on it. In the meantime, I have the authority of the Superior-General of the Congregation of the Mission for saying that such a society though not a part of the family of St. Vincent, should be united with it by the closest ties of charity, and should partake as much as possible of all the spiritual advantages of this holy communion.

"You know how much I prize the opinion of your dear and most estimable Rev. Mother as well as that of dear Mother Austin. Do, then, most humbly and earnestly solicit their advice on this most trying emergency. I will communicate the result to Dr. Everard, whom I hope shortly to meet in Dublin, and to such others as I may deem it prudent, and I trust that the spirit of God will guide our ultimate decision.

"I did hope to be able to pass through York, but I find that there will be confirmation in my own chapel on next Monday, and of course I must hasten to be present on the occasion. In the unavoidable hurry of this moment I can only request you to say everything that you think I would wish to Rev. Mother and my other friends in York, and recommend myself earnestly to your prayers and theirs.

"I remain, dear daughters in J. C.,

"Your faithful friend and servant,

"D. MURRAY.

"*London, 6th February.*"

The idea of making a foundation according to the *projet d'accord* with the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul was entirely abandoned, and all agreed that the work should be begun with the rule the sisters already followed, leaving other points to future arrangement. During the short time that now remained to them in York, the sisters assiduously continued the studies and practices of religious life; and Sister Mary Augustine transcribed all that she considered might be of help in preparing her for the important work that was before her.

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## CHAPTER II.

### RETURN TO IRELAND—FIRST CONVENT OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.

DR. MURRAY, on his return home in February, 1815, lost no time in making preparations for the reception of the sisters, on whose practical sense and ardent charity he based his cherished hopes for the comfort, the succour, and the enlightenment of the helpless poor of the flock. The house he destined for the convent was situated in William-street, an unimportant locality immediately adjoining Summer Hill, on the north side of the city, and had been built by the Trinitarian Confraternity for an orphanage. Mr. Christopher Elliot, the president of the society, offered to give up the establishment to the Sisters of Charity —in consideration of their taking charge of the orphans. Dr. Murray enlarged the house and built a pretty little chapel at a cost of about

£2,000, the greater part of which sum was contributed by Miss Matilda Denis, a friend and fellow-worker of Mrs. O'Brien, and vividly interested in the success of the new foundation.

Early in the month of August the Irish sisters in York made the spiritual exercises in preparation for their return to their native land. Dr. Murray was resolved to go himself to England and to bring home with joy those dear daughters whom he had led forth in high hope more than three years and three months before. Leaving Dublin on the 13th August, he arrived in York on the 18th of the same month; and, the sisters being quite ready to start on the homeward journey, the travellers bade adieu that very day to their kind friends the good nuns of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin. On the 22nd of August they sailed into the bay of Dublin with a favourable wind, and stepped on shore exultingly; for though the world was still before them with all its difficulties and all its uncertain issues, they felt that the work for which they had so longed and prayed was now virtually begun.

But the cross awaited them at the entrance of the new path. On the very day after their arrival a great meeting of the Catholic prelates took place in Dublin: every bishop in Ireland, with one exception, being present. Dr. Murray gave the assembled dignitaries an account of his late mission, and conveyed to them the feelings of the authorities at Rome on the momentous question of the Veto. It was all too evident that the Papal court, being now under greater obligations than ever to the British Government, was disposed to make some concession to the wishes of the ministry: that in fact Pius VII., who owed the restoration of his dominions mainly to England, might be induced to grant a Veto to the king. The bishops unanimously pronounced the veto inadmissible. A remonstrance was voted to his Holiness, and an address to the Prince Regent; and Dr. Murray was requested to return at once to Rome and lay before the Sovereign Pontiff in express terms the sentiments of the Irish Church and people regarding a question which so vitally concerned their independence and their peace.

Dr. Murray, who never shirked a duty, accepted the commission, grieved though he was to leave at this juncture the little family he had but just brought to their new home. With characteristic energy and decision he desired them to prepare at once, by a retreat of three days, for the first emission of their vows, so that there might be no feeling of uncertainty, no perturbation of mind on so momentous a point during his absence; and that they might work with a consciousness of security, having plighted their faith to their heavenly spouse. Accordingly they were professed on the 1st of September, making their vows for one year, before the expiration of which time it was hoped that matters would be arranged on a more solid footing. Nor did he leave them without a wise and kindly guardian. He placed them

under the special care of Father Kenny. And then having appointed Father William Dinan of the Society of Jesus their confessor, he blessed the little chapel and named the Rev. Matthias Kelly their chaplain. On the day the Sisters of Charity made their vows Dr. Murray nominated Sister Mary Augustine Aikenhead Superior-General, and Sister Mary Catherine Walsh Mistress of Novices. On the 3rd of September he received the first postulant, Miss Catherine Lynch of Drogheda, and on the 7th he took his departure for Rome. Next day Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given in the convent chapel and the Most Holy deposited in the tabernacle.

This journey of Dr. Murray to Rome, though a great trial at the time, was productive of good in many ways to the infant community. From Paris he wrote to the young Rev. Mother :—

"*Paris, 24th Sept.*, 1815.

"My dear Child,

"I take up the pen merely to remind you that no distance can diminish the interest I feel for our little establishment. I have just come from visiting one of the houses served by Hospitalièrs de St. Thomas de Villeneuve. It contains about 500 sick children between twelve and fifteen years of age. I have visited the Superièure-Generale, and obtained from her a copy of their constitutions, which I think admirable. The rule is that of St. Augustine. It does not appear either from those constitutions or from the conversation of the Superièure-Generale that they have received any other approbation than that of the bishops in whose diocese the houses of the institute are situated. The vows are such as you have already heard. The religious elect a Superièure-Generale for the superintendence of the discipline, &c., of the different houses in the manner stated in the paper which she gave me. . . . . The different houses are under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary. I should not be sorry if you were to live under your present rule instead of that of St. Austin, and to adopt very nearly the constitutions of the Ladies of St. Thomas. But then what should we call you? I feel that there is some weight in what you say concerning the Rule of St. Austin.

"It would give me pleasure that you should write me your thoughts fully on the subject. Tell me how is dear Mother Catherine, and everything else you can about your little family. Has Anna Maria returned? How and where is she? I am just preparing to set off to-morrow morning for Rome. I do not expect to reach my destination in less than a month, as I do not mean to distress myself. I am perfectly happy in my company, and better in my health than I have been for a considerable time. Address as below. Matilda, to whom I desire my regards, will take charge of your letter. It must be post-paid, otherwise it would not be forwarded. May every blessing descend upon you and our little establishment.

"Write soon, lest your letter should not overtake me.

"Yours in Jesus Christ,

"D. Murray."

When sending the constitutions of the Ladies of St. Thomas to the Rev. Mother, Dr. Murray desired her to study them attentively; and also to make herself acquainted with those of the Ursulines, whose Institute requires them to teach the poor as well as the rich, and

those of the Visitation Nuns, who were originally founded to visit and attend the sick. All these follow the rule of St. Augustine, though their constitutions differ. Father Kenny was consulted on the matter, and after giving much consideration to the subject, agreed with the Rev. Mother that the York rule was the most desirable. This opinion was communicated without delay to Dr. Murray, who, previous to receiving the intelligence, had taken the first step towards consolidating the enterprise, by soliciting for the proposed Institute the approbation of the Holy See. There was great joy in the little convent when the following letter from Dr. Murray to "Mrs. Aikenhead, North William-street" arrived, bearing the post-mark *Roma*:—

"*Rome, 6th Dec.*, 1815.

"At length, my dear Child, I am enabled to write to you something decisive on a matter which has been to you, most justly for some time past, as it has been also to me, a subject of deep solicitude. When I received your most welcome lines of the 6th October, I was already taking steps to obtain the sanction of the Holy See for our little dear establishment of Summer Hill, very nearly in the manner which I find, by your letter, that you and Mr. Kenny approved of. I then proceeded with more courage. I have differed, however, a little from what you recommended. I recollect that you and Mother Catherine, as well as Mr. Kenny, seemed to approve highly of the Rules of York, which, as well as I remember (for I have sought in vain for a copy of them here) contained nothing but the general principles of a religious life. I recollected also that the constitutions of York have the sanction only of the Ordinary. It occurred to me, therefore, that the simplest and easiest way of proceeding would be to obtain for the Archbishop of Dublin a power from the Holy See to erect a congregation of Sisters of Charity, to live under his jurisdiction according to the Rules of the Convent of York, approved by Clement XI., *with the addition of a fourth vow*, binding the sisters to the peculiar duties of their state. This I have done. The sisters of the new congregation are to live under the Rules of the Convent of York, as far as those Rules are compatible with the fourth vow of *devoting their lives to the service of the poor*. The vows, you observe, are perpetual, and the fourth vow is conceived in general terms in the manner that we all agreed upon as the best to render the congregation extensively useful. The name of the congregation is not finally determined on; but I should be very anxious that it should be under the immediate invocation of the Blessed Virgin, be the particular term what it may. The constitutions may be extracted from those of St. Thomas of Villa Nova, with such alterations as we may deem expedient, after my return, and for these I deem the sanction of the Ordinary to be quite sufficient for us, as it is in York.

"Please to communicate this to our good friend in Clongowes Wood, and tell him he is not to imagine we have yet done with him. I have also obtained for you the privilege of celebrating in your chapel the Feast of the Sacred Heart, with its proper Mass on the usual day. I take with me a copy of the Mass to be inserted in your missal. It is your own fault that you have not asked for more. It gives me great pleasure to learn that your little flock has grown into something like a community. I hope, however, my dear Child, that as your number shall increase, your discipline shall be, if possible, more exact. It gives me great consolation that you and Mother Catherine are so deeply impressed with the importance of the circumstances in which you are placed. Begin with the true religious spirit; infuse it, as much as possible, into those who in some measure place their lot in your

hands; teach them a love of discipline, the great safeguard of piety, and the powerful instrument for advancing them to the perfection of their state and you will have the comfort of seeing your little community thriving under the blessing of Providence, and in sure progress towards the fulfilment of the divine object which you have in view. You know how much depends upon the manner in which the good work is begun; and I beg of you to have constantly before your eyes, not merely the responsibility which you incur with respect to the individuals who entrust themselves to your guidance, but also the much higher responsibility which you owe to God for the success of an establishment in which his honour is so much concerned. It will not, however, escape you that the feebler the instruments to be employed on such an occasion, the more God will be delighted to render them efficacious, that human wisdom may be humbled, and that all may be taught to exclaim: 'To the Immortal and Invisible King of Ages, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.' Give yourselves up into his hands, the willing but humble instruments of his goodness; and poor and miserable and powerless as you are, He will be delighted to employ you for purposes worthy of Himself.

". . . . I beg you will communicate my most cordial regards to Mother Catherine and every member of your little community, and assure them that they have a constant place in my thoughts at the altar. Remember me also to any other of my friends who may fall in your way, especially those about whom you know I am particularly interested. About Christmas I hope once more to face towards home. My health has never been better; Dr. Murphy and Mr. Blake are also well.

"May every blessing attend you; and believe me most sincerely your servant in Christ,

"D. Murray."

The mother of the little community now felt assured that all her hopes were about to be realised, and that a perfectly religious spirit would be infused into the rising congregation by its saintly founder. The Rescript alluded to in the above letter, and dated the 30th of November, 1815, reached the archbishop, Dr. Troy, on the 6th of January, 1816. The following is a translation of the documents in question :—

*Petition of the Most Rev. Doctor Troy, for obtaining from the Holy See the faculty of instituting in Dublin the Pious Congregation of the Sisters of Charity.*

"Most Holy Father,

"John Thomas Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, the most humble petitioner of your Holiness, ardently desiring to obtain for the sick members of the flock committed to his charge, the same offices of charity which the Daughters of Charity, instituted by St. Vincent de Paul, afford to the sick in France, presumes to lay with profound reverence before your Holiness his anxious solicitude, that a congregation of ladies who would be devoted to similar works of piety should be established in Dublin. As, however, ladies living according to the rules prescribed by the said St. Vincent de Paul, should be subject not only to the Mother-General of the Sisters of Charity, but also to the Superior-General of the Missionary priests who resides always in France, an arrangement which we could not adopt without the greatest inconvenience, on account of the difference of language, the distance of the places of residence, and other grave impediments, the said

archbishop, therefore, supplicates your Holiness to vouchsafe graciously to impart to him the faculty of erecting and instituting in the City of Dublin aforesaid, a pious congregation of ladies immediately subject to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Dublin for the time being, according to the Rules of the nuns of York, whose Rules were confirmed by the predecessor of your Holiness, Pope Clement XI., in his constitution issued on the 13th July, 1703, which begins, '*Inscrutabile Divinæ Providentiæ*'—a fourth vow however, being added of devoting themselves perpetually to the service of the poor."

[*The Answer.*]

*From an Audience held on the 30th day of November*, 1815.

"The above petition having been inspected, and the reasons therein adduced having been considered, our Most Holy Father Pius VII., by Divine Providence Pope, on reference thereto being made by me, the undersigned Prefect of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, has agreeably to the petition of the aforesaid Archbishop, graciously imparted to him the faculty of erecting and instituting in the City of Dublin a Pious Congregation or Conservatory of Ladies under the immediate jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Dublin for the time being, according to the Rules of the English Virgins approved by His Holiness Clement XI. of holy memory, in his Constitution, dated 13th July, 1703, which begins *Inscrutabile*. He granted, moreover, to the said Archbishop the faculty of adding to the other vows to be taken by the Virgins of the Congregation or Conservatory to be thus erected a fourth vow, to devote themselves perpetually to the service of the poor; all things, however, which are prescribed by the said rules, and are compatible with the superadded fourth vow to continue in force; for which let the conscience of the Archbishop remain charged.

"Given at the Palace of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, on the day and year above written.

"Gratis, without any payment whatsoever on any title.

"L. Cardl. Litta, *Prefect.*"

During Dr. Murray's absence the little community in William-street, increased by four or five new members, were busily engaged in putting their house in order; attending to the orphans, of whom fourteen were lodged in the establishment; and teaching in the poor school, to which the children of the neighbourhood now resorted in great numbers. A constant correspondence was kept up with Mother Austin Chalmers of York, that good friend being applied to in minor difficulties, and giving every help in her power with undiminished zeal and kindness. The archbishop, Dr. Troy, showed a truly paternal interest in the new congregation. On the 27th of December, in the little convent chapel, his Grace ordained two priests, the Rev. John Cantwell (afterwards Bishop of Meath) and the Rev. Patrick Smith.

In the month of March, 1816, Dr. Murray returned from Rome, and brought with him for the new convent a brief of affiliation to the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, with permission for the enrolling of members, and the yearly celebration of the proper Mass. On the 20th of June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, a solemn high Mass was celebrated in the chapel by Dr. Murray, who explained on the occasion

the nature of the devotion thus, for the first time, introduced into Ireland, taking the text of his homily from the Gospel of St. John, chap. xv. 9-16.

So occupied was Dr. Murray with the affairs of the Irish Church that he could not for some months after his return carry out what the Holy See had empowered him to do in regard to the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity. However he wrote to Father Kenny to consult about the desirability of adopting the York Rule, and to ask his opinion as to which of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary (under whose patronage he purposed placing the congregation) he would recommend for adoption as the special feast of the institute. Father Kenny gladly complied with the request of his ever dear and esteemed friend; carefully studied the York Rule, a copy of which had been sent to him for perusal; gave his attention to the question of special patronage; and in due course returned the following answer:—

"*Clongowes Wood*, 18*th July*, 1816.

"My Lord,

"Mr. P. Farrell's return to Dublin affords me the opportunity of returning with many thanks the *Mémoires* which you were so good as to lend me. The work was so interesting that I took the liberty of allowing many others in the house to peruse it, which the soiled blue cover will attest, I hope without exciting your Grace's disapprobation.

"I have done little, but have thought a good deal on the subject which your Grace was pleased to submit to my consideration. It seems to me that *the Rule* ought to be immediately proposed to the observance of the community as the one given them by the Holy See. It is clear that the last clause in the last paragraph of the Rescript, 'firmis tamen omnibus in enuntiatis Regulis præscriptis et cum quarto adjecto voto compatibilibus,' prevents any alteration in the York Rules, with I believe the single exception of the first rule, where the last line must be omitted, and something like the following substituted after the words *and salvation of our neighbour* ' by consecrating our lives to the service of our indigent fellow-creatures, and more particularly to that of the sick-poor whom we are to consider as the grand object recommended to our charity by the Lord Jesus our heavenly spouse and the true Samaritan. These we are to assist under the direction of Obedience, with that tenderness, generosity, and constancy which our blessed Lord Himself proposed for our imitation in the words of the Gospel so strongly addressed to all Christians, but which we should consider as peculiarly directed to each of us: Go and do thou in like manner.' (*Luke*, x. 37.)

"With some such declaration of the specific object of the institute, *the Rule* is perfected, and this alone is sufficient for the present, as it secures domestic discipline, the maxims and most of the functions of religious life. Only the Rule should first be put into the hands of the novices, and explained to them, and if necessary shown to strangers to whom the account of the institute might properly be given. The Rule in my mind also is all that should be done for some time, in order that, by its practice, that experience be obtained which is necessary for the enactment of the Constitutions. This I believe is the constant practice in all Religious Orders. The Rule is established by the Bull of Confirmation, and on that,

as on a firm basis, the competent authority erects the Constitutions which can only declare, explain, and apply the Rule to the object of the Institution. The alterations, then, which were made *ad interim* in the York Rule cannot be continued, as all the prescriptions of said Rule are perfectly compatible with the fourth Vow.

"The only thing now necessary to be determined is the Name and Titular Patron of the Congregation. I think that all this [is] virtually done by the Rescript and the Rule. In the *libello supplice* and in the Rescript it is denominated *Piam Congregationem Puellarum:* now though this *piam* may be rather a qualification than a denomination I should like to retain it. Thus we have authoritatively decided the first part of their title—*Pia Congregatio Puellarum.* Now the second Rule, or rather the second paragraph of the Rule, expressly constitutes the Blessed Virgin Mary Patroness of the Institute, and by designating her only by the title of *Most Glorious Queen of Heaven*, in my mind strongly indicates that the Feast of the Assumption should be the titular Feast of the Congregation. This enactment of the Rule cannot be changed, no more than any other compatible with the fourth Vow, with which it appears to me not only *compatible*, but appropriate to its object.

"1st. Because it is the term and reward of her co-operation here below in the salvation of souls, an object that these Religious should ever have before them to console and support them in the labours of their co-operation.

"2nd. It is the mystery of her life or rather that happy liberation which put an end to all the sufferings of her mortal sojourn; it is then an appropriate object of devotion and invocation to those who labour to lessen the ills and solace the woes of mortality.

"3rd. It is also the commemoration of her most happy death, whom the dying are to invoke with confidence; the veneration then paid to the mystery will doubtless be a claim to that special protection necessary for those females labouring to prepare their fellow-creatures to die happily in the Lord.

"Finally, it is the commencement of her everlasting life and her exaltation above the choirs of angels, when those blessed spirits who minister to the wants of expiring mortals were subjected in some measure to the power and influence which the Church seems to ascribe to the Virgin when she styles her Regina Angelorum, Regina Cœli; the veneration thus paid to this consummation of her glory and her joy, is an appropriate motive with this wonder of God's creation to employ her mediation and power in behalf of the sick and dying whom these virgins attend, that they may obtain the grace that crowns good works with perseverance and secures their happy passage from this world. And if the glorious Queen of Heaven will thus assist the objects of their charity, will not the mystery of her Coronation, so frequently and devoutly meditated by those servants of the Virgin, secure to them the grace that will show to themselves the Blessed Fruit of her womb, and crown their charity with a share of her unfading glory?

"These considerations move me to believe that it was not *sine numine* that the choice of [the] York Institute is made by the Rescript the Titular Patroness of this Congregation. Though I do not know the fact, yet from the words of the Rule, I must believe that the Assumption is regarded at York as the great Feast of the Institute; but it would seem more appropriate to the new Institution than even to them. I would then have the full, formal, and distinctive title of the congregation so expressed that every word would be either formally or virtually sanctioned by apostolic authority, and run thus:—

"Pia Congregatio Puellarum
(Quæ vulgo sorores charitatis vocantur)
Sub Patrocinio
Gloriossimæ Virginis in Cœlum Assumptæ
Pro inserviendis pauperibus
Auctoritate Apostolica
in
Civitate Dubliniensi,
ERECTA.

"This would be the Canonical Title by which in all communications with Rome I would have it designated. If they were in Latin called *Sorores* rather than *Filiæ*, it would be still more distinctive, as St. Vincent's Congregation is generally denominated by the latter term. I would then allow *Sisters of Charity* which has already gone abroad to be their vulgar or common name. It is shorter and equally expressive, if not more so, of their object than any other English term that could well be given them, and your Grace knows that it is quite common for the people to denominate in a short way a religious body by a name very different from its canonical title. The regular clergy of St. Camillus for the sick and dying were called *Crociferi* in Italy; and the Hospitaliers of Saint John of God were called *Ben fratelli;* the one from the insignia, the other from the object of the Institution.

"I would have no difficulty about the change in the form of the vows, if I had not seen mention of *Institute* and *General Superior*. The former was, I think, retained from a more strict than wise adherence to the form of our vows, where the promise of entering our Society meant something very different from what it could with the York ladies. The latter surprises me. Hitherto I conceived that it was universally the practice not to mention any Superior's name in the form of simple vows. These being contracts between God and the person, not *accepted* by the Church, though sanctioned by her authority, it would seem that neither her minister nor the superior who acts in virtue of her authority should have any share in the act. The contrary was, and is ever the case in solemn vows where the General Superior of the Congregation was always mentioned as the person through whose ministry the Church accepted and ratified the solemn engagement. Agreeably to these notions, the correctness of which I cannot now ascertain (but which are strictly practised in the difference between our solemn and simple vows) I would make the change thus:— After the word *obedience*, I would immediately add 'and also to devote my life under the direction of this sacred obedience to the service of the poor, understanding all the vows conformably to the Rules of the Pious Congregation of the Most Glorious Queen of Heaven established by apostolic authority for the perpetual service of the poor. I therefore humbly ask, &c.'

"With your Grace it must remain to determine whether the name of the Archbishop *pro tempore* should be introduced in lieu of this: 'to our General Superior,' which is found in the York form and the promise of living in the Congregation, to both of which I fear objection might be made, though I cannot now more fully explain myself. These things then being sanctioned by Dr. Troy, in one form or other, I should advise:—

"1st. That the Rule be transcribed, or if the Latin original could be had, be again translated, to which should be prefixed a translation of the Rescript and an official act of the Archbishop annexed to the Rescript, by which he declares that in virtue of said Rescript, he does erect said Congregation in such house and place.

"2nd. I would have the two old religious make their vows on the 15th of next month, after a previous Retreat performed by them and the whole community.

"3rd. I would have the Act of Erection dated from said day; and as rumours have gone abroad that nothing is fixed in that house, I would have the vows publicly made at High Mass, sung, if possible, by the Archbishop, who, in my humble opinion, should thus as it were publicly announce the erection of a new congregation under his immediate jurisdiction, and your Grace after the Gospel or before the Mass should give a homily on the occasion.

"In the meantime Mrs. Aikenhead should send me the distribution of time now observed that I may make report to your Grace.

"I think that by next Assumption day all that is *now absolutely* requisite to settle the form and government of the congregation can thus be done.

"To the Rule and authenticated acts I would prefix this title:—

"RULES (OR RATHER) THE RULE
Of the Pious Congregation which is usually called of the
Sisters of Charity, under the patronage of the
Most Glorious Queen of Heaven,
Instituted by
Apostolic authority for the Perpetual Service of the Poor.
1816.

"Mr. F.'s haste to be off has occasioned [me] to be hasty and of course inaccurate in penning what was before *mente concepta*. For all which negligence I ask indulgence, submitting all to your Grace's *meliore seniore judicio*.

"Your Grace's most obedient and devoted servant,

"PETER KENNY.

"*19th July*."

The Feast of the Assumption was now approaching, and it would have been desirable that the Titular Feast of the Congregation should on its first recurrence be celebrated with all possible solemnity. However, it was found so difficult to engage priests for a High Mass that the celebration was postponed to the octave day, which, as it was the anniversary of the arrival of the two first Sisters of Charity in Ireland, had an appropriateness of its own. Accordingly on the 22nd of August High Mass was celebrated and Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament given in the convent chapel, to the great consolation of the little community, which now consisted of six members:—the two professed mothers and four novices, namely, Sister Mary Teresa (Catherine Lynch); Sister Mary de Sales (Catherine Clinch); Sister Mary Aloysius (Alicia Clinch); and Sister Mary Magdalen (Catherine Chamberlain). The "old Religious" did not make their vows on that day as Father Kenny proposed that they should do. Dr. Murray differed from his friend on this point, and considered that matters were still too unsettled to make it prudent to draw public attention to the new institute. However, on the 1st of September, the anniversary of the day on which Mother Mary Augustine and Mother Mary Catherine had made their first vows, they renewed them at a private Mass celebrated by Dr. Murray.

On the 10th of September, the Feast of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, the Rev. Mother and Mother Catherine began the visitation of the sick-poor in their homes; and for the first time in Ireland religious were seen engaged in this work of benediction.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE CONGREGATION CANONICALLY ERECTED—RAHAN LODGE—FATHER ST. LEGER.

ALTHOUGH the Archbishop of Dublin received the Rescript of Pope Pius VII. early in January, 1816, he had not leisure to devote to the canonical erection of the congregation until the year approached its close. At length, however, Mother Mary Augustine and Mother Catherine got notice to prepare to make their perpetual vows, and, joined by their novices, they went into retreat on the 29th of November. Father Kenny came from Clongowes Wood to give them the spiritual exercises; and the instructions being in the chapel, a few lady friends were allowed to be present. Three days later Dr. Murray wrote the following note to the Rev. Mother :—

"My dear Child and Friend,

"Doctor Troy has not as yet drawn out the formal deed erecting your community into a congregation. I left the Rescript with him for that purpose, but his leisure has not yet allowed him to do so. This, however, is not essential, as he has given his entire sanction to the business from the very commencement, and this is of much more consequence than any written document to that effect. I send you the Rescript for any purpose for which it may be useful. If I cannot be with you time enough for first Mass (that is before your usual hour) on Tuesday, I hope at least to intrude myself a little after ten o'clock on that day.

"A thousand blessings attend you, and all who are along with you.

"Most faithfully yours in Christ,

"D. Murray.

"*Sunday night, Decr. 1st,* '16."

Dr. Troy having, not long after, sent to the convent the long-expected Act of Institution, Dr. Murray enclosed a copy of the vows with this note :—

"*Dublin, Dec. 8th,* 1816.

"Dear Rev. Mother,

"Enclosed I send you the form of your vows. At the end of the form the following conclusion may be written :—

"*In testimony whereof I hereunto sign my name. Done in the Convent of North William-street, Dublin, this 9th day of December, in the year of our Lord,* 1816.

"*Sister Mary Austin, called in the world Mary Frances Aikenhead.*

"I intend to use my Roman vestments to-morrow, as the occasion is one on which I feel much exultation. I would like that you should make your vows in presence of the Most Sacred Host, and immediately before your Communion. I have asked Mr. Armstrong and Miss Denis to be present. When you communicate the form of the vows to Mother Catherine tell her that I invoke a thousand blessings on her sacrifice, as I do also upon yours. I hope to see you both before Mass. Adieu till then.

"Faithfully yours in Xt.

"D. MURRAY."

Except for the presence of the two friends invited by Dr. Murray, namely, the Vicar-General, and Miss Denis, the kind benefactor who had enabled him to build the chapel, the ceremony of that day was perfectly private. At an early hour Dr. Murray offered the Holy Sacrifice, and received the vows of the two religious. It was a happy and a memorable day for him as well as for those who were now bound irrevocably to the service of God in the poor. But the Rev. Mother always regarded the 1st of September as her profession day, because on that day she bound herself to God and to religion, and was fully resolved that, even should the new foundation fail, she would enter some other Order in which, labouring for the poor, she should fulfil her sacred engagement.

Early in 1817 Dr. Troy obtained from Rome a grant of special indulgences for the new congregation, and in the spring of the same year four postulants entered the convent:—Miss Judith Gernon of Drogheda, Miss Mary Cogan of Cork, Miss Bridget O'Reilly of the county of Longford, and Miss Martha Weldon of Dublin.

Up to this time the sisters had not assumed any religious costume, but had worn a simple black dress and plain muslin cap. It was now necessary they should choose a dress at once simple, inexpensive, and suitable to their profession; and accordingly the habit, since so well known as that of the Irish Sisters of Charity, was adopted. Though composed of plain black stuff it is not inelegant. The veil is ample and falls rather close to the face; the skirt, when not pinned up at working hours, falls behind in the manner of a half train, and the sleeves are wide. The guimpe is black, and no white is seen except in the folds of linen about the face and throat. One thing alone is brilliant—the solid broad brass cross, bearing the image of the crucified Saviour on one side, which is suspended at the breast and shines in sunlight or lamplight like a gem in a dusky setting. Suspended from the girdle are the Rosary beads, and the steel chains to which are attached scissors, keys, and other requisites for the sick-room or the work-room.

In putting on the religious habit the Sisters of Charity did not relinquish their surnames. Outside the convent they were called Mrs. Aikenhead, Mrs. Walsh, and so on with the rest. In the community the foundress was never called "Mother Augustine," for, from first to last

she was invariably "the Reverend Mother." Mother Catherine, indeed, was only for a short time known to the world in general as "Mrs. Walsh." The poor, owing perhaps to the singular motherliness of her countenance and manner, caught at the title, and spoke of her, and addressed her, only as "Mother Catherine." In the end rich and poor alike called her by no other name; and in common parlance it was curious enough to hear the associated names of "Mrs. Aikenhead and Mother Catherine."

At the Feast of Pentecost all except the postulants who had lately entered, assumed the religious habit without any ceremony; but in the month of September, when two of the candidates were judged fit to be admitted to the habit, Dr. Murray considered it advisable that the ceremony should be performed in the chapel and before a moderate number of witnesses. There were about sixty persons present, who, besides attending at an unusual and edifying ceremony, had the advantage of hearing the greatest pulpit orator of the day: for Dr. Murray had induced Father Kenny to preach on the occasion. Taking for his text the words of St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 14) *Charitas Christi urget nos*, the preacher explained the nature and object of the institute, deducing practical instructions on the manner in which the sisters should, in the humble pursuit of their labours, set at nought the opinion and opposition of the world, endeavouring that their every act should be under the influence of those animating words of the great apostle—"The Charity of Christ urgeth us;" and putting strongly before them the obligation they assumed of aiming at the high virtue which this public consecration of themselves involved. From that day forth the text of Father Kenny's sermon became the motto of the congregation. Emblazoned in their chapels, engraved on their seals, and transfused into their daily deeds are to be found these words: *Charitas Christi urget nos.*

Dr. Troy, assisted by his coadjutor, received the candidates. The ceremonial chosen for the first public clothing, as most applicable to the duties of the Sisters of Charity, was that of the Hospitalières of St. Thomas of Villanova, Dr. Murray having brought a copy of the ceremonial from Paris, where he obtained it in 1815. The form is still used in the congregation as he arranged it. In the month of December following the first public profession took place, when Sisters Mary Teresa Lynch and Mary de Sales Clinch pronounced their vows. The ceremonial was taken, as on the previous occasion, from that of the Hospitalières of St. Thomas of Villanova. Two days later, Dr. Murray was once more called away to Paris.

This year of satisfactory progress was succeeded by one which, with great blessings, brought also severe trials. In 1818, the little community lost by death two very edifying and useful members, and a dear young friend whose heart was set on being a Sister of Charity,

and who, in all human probability, would, if spared, have been a useful member of the congregation. Sister Mary Teresa Lynch, the first who had entered in the new convent, caught a fever, and in the third month after her profession became so ill as to leave no hope of her recovery. Father Kenny, who was at that time confessor to the sisters, and attached to the little chapel of the Jesuits in Hardwicke-street (formerly, before that street existed, the convent of the Poor Clares, with its entrance in Dorset-street), frequently visited the dying sister; the Rev. Walter Meyler, one of the parochial clergy, administered the last sacraments, and on the fourth Sunday in Lent she expired, while the community were praying around her. Next day her remains were taken to the little chapel, where High Mass was celebrated next morning. The office was numerously attended, for all who heard the circumstance were touched by the early call to her reward of one who had consecrated herself to the service of God and the poor. Her life in the world had been one of generous devotion to her family, the younger members of which she had watched over with a mother's care, and worked for like a slave. In the convent she was edifying. She strenuously aimed at perfection, especially the perfection of obedience; and the readiness with which she resigned her own will and undertook severe duties astonished those who knew that in her early youth, before her family met with reverses, she had been brought up in the very lap of ease. On the 4th of March she was laid in St. James's churchyard, in a vault belonging to the Poor Clares of Harold's cross, which community, in allowing the interment, rendered a kind service to the Sisters of Charity, who had not then a burial place of their own.[1] This first death, so like a sacrificial rite of solemn significance, made a profound impression on the little community. The Rev. Mother, when alluding to the circumstance thirty-three years later, said that the impression made on her was so awful, deep, and lasting, that she never attempted to describe what she felt.

During Sister Mary Teresa's illness, a new source of anxiety arose on the score of another sister who showed symptoms of consumption. This was Sister Mary Magdalen Chamberlain, the young lady who had been prevented by ill-health from going with Miss Aikenhead to York. Summer brought no improvement of a lasting kind, and her

[1] The graveyard of St. James's Church, in the street of the same name, was a favourite place of interment with the Catholics in old times. O'Keefe, the dramatist, whose father was buried there in 1758, close to the tomb of Sir Toby Butler, whose effigy in stone with wig and gown lay all along the sepulchral monument, tells us that on St. James's Day it was customary for the friends and relatives of those buried in the churchyard to come and dress up the graves with flowers, cut papers, Scripture phrases, chaplets, and a number of pretty and pious devices.—"Recollections," vol. i., pp. 22, 47. Previous to the establishment of the cemeteries of Golden Bridge and Glasnevin, the burial fees paid by Catholics was a considerable source of income to the incumbent of St. James's, amounting, it is said, to £600 per annum.

profession, which was to have taken place in July, was postponed. Next month, however, all hope had to be relinquished. Her earnest desire was granted, and she was made happy by being allowed to pronounce her vows; Dr. Murray administered to her the rites of the Church; and on the 22nd of August, in the full possession of her senses, she sweetly passed away. The congregation lost in this sister a most promising member: one who was humble, recollected, and singularly mortified; most obliging to all, and indefatigable in the service of the poor. She too was laid in the vault of the Poor Clares in St. James's churchyard.

The third death was that of Miss Martha Weldon, who shortly after her entrance, in 1817, was attacked with a nervous fever, and before the year had expired was obliged to return home, on the understanding, however, that she would be received again in case her health should be restored. This was not to be. She fell into decline, and in the winter of 1818 there was no longer any hope. By Dr. Murray's desire Mrs. Aikenhead and Mother Catherine went to visit her. She had begged this favour, and it was a comfort to her to see them. Having borne the great disappointment of her life, and the painful tedium of her last days, with a sweet conformity which edified all around her, she died a happy, holy death on the 20th of December. At the request of her family, who knew how entirely her heart had been with the congregation, her remains were laid in the little convent chapel previous to interment; and thus she came in death to rest for a little space in the midst of those with whom it had been her fond dream to dwell for life. Several Masses were offered for the eternal repose of her soul, and she was then carried from the convent precincts to the grave.

It may here be mentioned that, about two years later, her sister Miss Eliza Weldon entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity. She took the name of Mary Francis, and made her profession after the usual term of probation; but in less than two months from that date symptoms of consumption set in, and she did not long survive. Indeed during her noviceship her health seemed so delicate that it was proposed to her to return home. This step she would not consent to take, nor would her father pain her by requiring her to do so. When Mrs. Aikenhead mentioned to Mr. Weldon her apprehensions regarding his daughter, she said at the same time that, knowing his circumstances to be straitened, she would not allow him to pay the dower stipulated for. But this just man replied that, having given his child to God, he would not lessen the portion he should have given her if she were going to be settled in the world; and accordingly he paid the full dower though it was evident she could not long survive.

The loss of two highly promising sisters in the very early days of the institute was indeed a severe affliction. Mrs. Aikenhead would at any time have mourned over the loss of such ardent and devoted daughters

of the congregation; but just at this crisis their removal seemed calamitous. The work was increasing on every side, while the hands were lessening. The strain, therefore, on the old members became extremely severe. For her own part the Rev. Mother met the emergency by doing the duty of several offices. She was Superior; and she was Novice Mistress in the place of Mother Catherine who had to be relieved. She went on the sick mission; and when she returned after her round of the lanes she would take up the duty of an ailing or absent sister. Oftentimes she went to the kitchen and dressed the dinner for the community. This last avocation, unfortunately, did not always greatly task her skill; for even under the most careful management commons sometimes ran short, and there was a period when the dinner in the William-street convent consisted, on two days of the week, of nothing better than the oatmeal porridge commonly called "stirabout."

One day when all the sisters were out the Rev. Mother thought the opportunity a good one for scouring the stairs. She was in the midst of the work with her sleeves turned up, her long skirt pinned back, and a capacious checked apron covering her habit, when a ring at the door summoned her from the pail. Descending forthwith to answer the call, she found that a Right Rev. prelate wished to know was the superioress of the Sisters of Charity at home. She at once ushered in the visitor and retired, saying that Rev. Mother would be with him presently. In two or three minutes the apron was removed, the train let down, and everything set right; and Mrs. Aikenhead made her appearance to hold high converse with his lordship, who seemed not to have the least suspicion of the sudden transformation that had taken place from the hard-worked serving sister to the dignified and elegant Mother Superior.

Mrs. Aikenhead was at this time of her life singularly prepossessing in appearance. Her figure had lost nothing of its symmetry, nor was her step less elastic than of old. The religious habit suited her, as well if not better than a secular garb. A person who saw her for the first time, as she stepped across a yard on one of her charitable peregrinations, could not help asking: "Who is that noble-looking woman?" There was less vivacity now in the habitual expression of her face, but its native mobility was not lost. When silent she often had a preoccupied, almost a severe look; but when she spoke, it seemed as if the countenance conveyed more than the words, and registered with greater fidelity every change of feeling. Whether she spoke, or whether she was silent, the beautiful well-set eyes dominated the face.

Her healthy mental constitution enabled her to bear the strain which was now inevitable, and to meet with more than equanimity the difficulties she had to encounter in every step of a hitherto

untrodden road. In Ireland precedent could not be cited in any case that came before her for consideration. Here, religious had never hitherto been brought into daily, almost hourly, communication with the world. But Mary Aikenhead's former apprehensions had vanished; her courage was now equal to every emergency, and her faith was so unshaken in the providence of God that the future was no more to her than a *tabula rasa* on which the divine mercy and goodness would assuredly trace the way in lines of light. However, her bodily strength, though considerable, was not equal to the exertions she had been going through. To her other laborious avocations she had added in the early part of 1818 a constant attendance on the sick sisters. During the illness of one of the patients she took only an occasional rest without undressing; and for a month previous to the death of Sister Mary Teresa Lynch she sat up with her every night, allowing herself little or no rest even during the daytime. At length, her own health gave way. The physicians who were consulted found that her nerves had become much relaxed, that symptoms of water on the chest had appeared, and that the heart was not unaffected. They judged that complete rest and change of air were necessary for her restoration. Fortunately she, too, was under obedience; and the ecclesiastical Superior imperatively enforced her departure for Rahan Lodge, in the King's County, a retired country seat of the O'Brien family.

These good friends, though their names have not appeared for some time past in our narrative, were nevertheless unfailing in their help to the new institution. At this time, as indeed at many a previous and many a subsequent period of our history, Mrs. O'Brien proved a devoted and powerful ally. Oftentimes in the early days of the William-street convent she put on the poked bonnet and the hooded cloak of a Sister of Charity, and accompanied one of the nuns on the visitation of the sick, thereby leaving another of the community free for a different duty. On other occasions she conveyed the sisters in her carriage to distant places which otherwise they should have had neither time nor strength to reach. Her generous donations and those of the O'Brien family in general, were of material help at this crisis, as well as in other circumstances of difficulty. Her sister-in-law Miss O'Brien was a liberal supporter of the new foundation, and that lady's father, Mr. Denis O'Brien, gave to the congregation £100 a year during twelve years, beginning from the date of Mary Aikenhead's departure for York. It was a happiness to Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien that their country house could now be made available in carrying out the doctors' advice, and it can easily be imagined how enchanted these friends were to have their dear Mary with them once more. But one can also understand how severe a blow it was to her to be obliged at this early stage to leave her convent, and separate herself from the little family dwelling and working there.

About seven o'clock on a fine morning in the month of July, 1818, Mrs. Aikenhead and her friends arrived at the Portobello harbour just outside the city boundaries on the Rathmines side, and took their places in the covered barge, or "packet," which was about to sail, or rather to glide away at a snail's pace towards the middle regions of the Green Isle. This water-way was a favourite mode of travelling in those days. Two rival companies, the Grand Canal Company, and the Royal Canal Company, having with commendable enterprise and engineering skill, intersected the great plain extending from Dublin to the Shannon, the principal towns of the interior were rendered more conveniently accessible to travellers, and general traffic through the country was much extended. The shares went up and down like other speculations, and people talked of "going into the canals," as their descendants now do of venturing into railways, investing in American bonds, or trying their luck in the Lombardo Venetians. The only question was whether they would purchase into the "Grand Canals" or speculate in the "Royals."

Many travellers really did think the canal boat, with its "state cabin" furnished with two rows of seats and a long table, and its Noah's ark hulk flattened into a deck on the top, much preferable to the dusty, hot, top-heavy stage coach with its hampered "six insides." But indeed the advantages of this mode of locomotion were, if one believed the companies' advertisements, numerous and surpassing:— The passengers were sure to have a great pleasure from the variety of beautiful views the country presented; they were not delayed for dinner or breakfast; they were allowed the enjoyment of free air, exercise, and repose; and lastly they were safe from robbers! It might have been added that travelling by passage boat was soothing to the nerves, the motion being almost as imperceptible as the progress; and that it was as enjoyable as a walk through the green fields, seeing that the canal meandered through meadows and pastures, touching only the outskirts of towns, while the larks sang in the heavens high over their nests on the banks. Accidents being out of the question, nothing could ever happen to frighten any of the passengers, except indeed the half-fares, that is to say the children, who with Noah's story no doubt in their heads were in the habit of falling into an agony of terror whenever they perceived the cabin darkening, the boat sinking between the embankment of the locks, and the flood-gates opening behind.

As a journey of thirty or forty miles consumed the whole day, the passengers had ample opportunity of observing one another if not of becoming intimately acquainted. The talk in the cabin, the walk on the deck, the breakfasting and the dining—the latter ceremony being of the simplest character, as the entertainment almost invariably consisted of a boiled leg of mutton and turnips cooked on board—were

the events of the day in which character, taste, good breeding or the contrary, were displayed. People often talked in after years of those who had attracted their attention, and whose names they had learned in just such a short stage as this of life's journey; for here, in these old boats, various classes and fortunes met together: gentlefolks, farmers, traders, military men and tourists, priests and parsons.

On that particular July day there was not only the Mother-General of the Irish Sisters of Charity among the group slowly traversing the plains of Kildare; but there was also the Rector of a college lately established near Rahan, Father Robert St. Leger of the Society of Jesus. The good father was not so absorbed in his affairs as to allow his fellow-travellers to pass quite unregarded. Something in Mrs. Aikenhead's manner or in her words attracted his attention; he observed her closely; and made up his mind that she was a woman of no ordinary stamp. Before nightfall the journey was happily accomplished, and next morning Mrs. Aikenhead could look around and see how peaceful, sweet, and pastoral was this Rahan or "ferny place," as the spot is named in Gaelic.

But remote and unimportant as the place now looked, it nevertheless had had its history. The ferns were rooted in a sacred soil, and if the immemorial rocks could speak strange tales might be revealed. There had been a cluster of churches and schools[1] there in days gone by, round which the native youth, and scholars from Britain and the Continent, encamped in wattle huts, and stirred the monastic silence as they volubly rehearsed their themes. During the penal times Mass was usually celebrated in secluded places of the neighbourhood on great blocks of stone, while guards were posted around to protect the

[1] The monastery of Rahan was founded towards the end of the sixth century by St. Carthage or Mochuda, who became a bishop, resided there for forty years, and attracted a great community of disciples, not only from Ireland, but from foreign countries. Expelled by the jealousy of some of the clergy of the district, and the tyranny of the king, he departed with his whole community, numbering 847, exclusive of lay attendants and the children of his school. In the course of this emigration they were well received by saints and by kings, and Carthage was offered sites on which to establish his monastery. He refused all however until the chief of the Decies seeing he would not accept anything better, told him that a wild tract beyond the mountain, rich in forests and fish should be his for ever. Carthage and his followers travelled on towards this solitude by a way still called in Irish "The path of the Saints." There on the banks of the Blackwater he founded a monastery, a college, and an asylum for lepers, many of whom he had brought with him from Rahan. And this was the beginning of the renowned and holy city of Lismore.—Rev. M. Kelly's notes to the "Martyrology of Tallagh," pp. 134-135.

A distinguished foreigner, St. Constantine, succeeded St. Carthage at Rahan, and cleared a large tract of land near that place, which was called "Constantine's Plain." In it were a town and church called Cell-Belaigh, which Rumaun, the poet, endowed with a third of his wealth, and such was the influx of foreigners to it, attracted probably by the fame of the monastery, that seven streets are said to have been exclusively inhabited by them. Rumaun is said to have been buried at Rahan in the same tomb with O'Suanaigh, the patron saint. The ruins are small but of great interest to antiquaries.—"Diocese of Meath," vol. iii., p. 625.

minister of God and the congregation from the intrusion of the priest-hunters. In 1798, the Catholics suffered terribly from the Black Horse and the Orange Yeomanry. "For several Sundays," as it is recorded, "Mass was prevented, and the people were so terrified at the wanton cruelties perpetrated by the military, that they often remained in the fields all night, apprehensive lest their houses would be attacked and themselves put to death."[1]

Just at the time of Mrs. Aikenhead's visit, silence and peace were the outward characteristics of the place; and yet the understanding heart, if not the eye of sense, could perceive that the place was instinct with life—and life of that intense character which recalled the earlier age of scholarship and sanctity. In the previous year the Presentation nuns had made a foundation at Rahan, and opened schools for the instruction of the poor children of the surrounding country; and during this very season Father Kenny and his brethren of the Society of Jesus were busily engaged in their newly-opened college at Tullabeg, in the same neighbourhood. Nor were the residents at Rahan Lodge without their share, even in these works; they were as ever neighbourly and helpful; and Miss O'Brien had a special title to rank as a founder, for she had endowed the convent with three acres of land and maintenance for four nuns, and also had liberally assisted in establishing the new College of St. Stanislaus.

Happily and speedily the enforced rest and fresh country air wrought a change in Mrs. Aikenhead's health; nor was she sorry in the end to have this interval of disengagement from active work: for her mind was very seriously occupied, and leisure was absolutely necessary for the consideration of vitally important questions. The constitutions, on which the well-being and stability of the new congregation would mainly depend, had not yet been formed; and although she could not without aid frame this code, there were many points which required that in their practical bearings they should be deeply meditated by her. Again it was clear that the training of the Novices would before long devolve entirely on her: for Mother Catherine felt that she was not qualified for that office, her attraction being for the sick-poor. The Rev. Mother was now seriously preoccupied by this subject: the more, as she felt that she who had been so lately a novice herself, was but indifferently prepared to undertake so responsible an office as that of forming religious for an altogether new institute.

Father Kenny well knew how these matters were pressing on her mind, and gladly would have assisted her. But he found it impossible to command the time requisite for the work of organising the congregation. How could he indeed, while the demands on his attention

[1] "Diocese of Meath," vol. ii., p. 534.

and his time were so varied and so constant, that, as a matter of fact, he hardly got time to read his breviary? However he took care that she should not suffer from his inability to come to her assistance at that moment.

He introduced her to the Rector of St. Stanislaus, Father Robert St. Leger—the same whose notice she had attracted on board the boat; and, commending the interests of the new congregation to his kindly care, was fully sensible that he had given to the Rev. Mother a truly helpful friend. To Father St. Leger, therefore, she laid open her whole mind, and confided her deep anxieties. "He saw at once," as we read in the *Annals* of the Congregation, "the work before him, and threw his whole heart into it. His first efforts were directed to forming the Superior herself, knowing well of what main import it was that she should be well instructed in the whole *arcanum* of spiritual life, before she could with any degree of confidence undertake the instruction of others. Hence he spared no labour in grounding her in all that he considered necessary, not only by oral instruction, but by a very valuable series of letters addressed to her after her return to Dublin." This was in fact the beginning of an intimate association extending over six years between the zealous and devoted Jesuit and the superior of the new institute. Perhaps in this place may fitly be inserted an abstract of his labours; and some extracts from his letters, which give an idea of the spirit of the congregation, and to a certain extent reveal the spring of the Rev. Mother's own interior life.

"On examining the Rules and Constitutions of the York Institute," continue the *Annals*, "he found that though the base was the Rule of St. Ignatius, to prevent its being recognised as such the Rules had been so transposed—the Rules of the Summary, which regard the practice of interior virtue, being confounded with the common rules, which refer principally to external observances—that it seemed to him shorter to remodel the whole than to try to correct the existing code. Accordingly, thinking it no violation of his own rules to give a correct version to those who already had them in substance, he gave Rev. Mother a copy of the Rules of the Summary, the common rules and the official rules, and desired her to try to model her conventual observances on them. He set himself to reconstruct the Constitutions, keeping as close as possible to those of St. Ignatius in the first nine chapters: the tenth, regarding the priests, should necessarily differ much. Meanwhile he gave Rev. Mother a copy of the General Examen which prefaces the Constitutions, desiring her to show it to those who applied for admission and wished to know something of the Institute; and he suggested that an official letter containing an abridgment of the Constitutions should be sent to Propaganda. This document, called the 'Ten Articles,' he also drew up for her, giving in it an indication of points on which he intended to enlarge in the Constitutions. This was forwarded by His Grace to Rome, but Propaganda required that the Constitutions should be entirely completed before the question of confirming them could be entertained. Father St. Leger devoted to them every spare moment he could command, and in about three years completed two

entire copies, one in Latin, the other in English. These our dear Rev. Mother copied. The Latin one was sent to Propaganda, the English copy received Dr. Murray's approbation, to which he added that he *enjoined* them to be observed by all the Sisters of Charity within his jurisdiction: affixing his official seal. Besides the weighty and gratuitously assumed task of drawing up the Constitutions, Father St. Leger was indefatigable in the instruction of the communities, giving the Spiritual Exercises and Instructions during the Triduum before renovation—also by a series of letters addressed to our dear Rev. Mother, full of wisdom and prudence, in which, as in his instructions, he took the greatest pains to bring down to our level all that might seem above it, by giving incidents and examples in the Society by which he made clear and practical what might otherwise have been obscure."

The importance which Father St. Leger attached to this work of framing the Constitutions may be inferred from the following passage in one of his letters to Mrs. Aikenhead:—

"I am hard at work for you, and hope when we next meet to show you the Latin copy completed. The Constitutions are rather long, but I am sure you will not consider them *too* long since they are to be perpetual, and cannot be retouched at a future day to supply deficiency. I shall only add that even if the Divine Lawgiver had not deigned to descend to minutiæ in legislating for his chosen people, the example of all the holy founders who have appeared in the Church would move me to judge that regularity and religious government are materially aided by them."

And again, having as he thought reason to apprehend that the Rev. Mother had not taken sufficient pains to inspire into the younger members of the congregation a high notion of their Constitutions, he thus writes:—

"Believe me, a love and veneration for your Constitutions is the great thing to be inspired into each member: their obedience to them will be in exact proportion to their respect for them. This attachment to their Rule was what held up the Society at all times as an object of wonder, and made them respect themselves so much that they merited the respect of others. May you never know the curse of religious persons differing in their opinion from their Constitutions! It is one of the points of manifestation; and it is directly and indirectly inculcated to the Mistress of Novices to teach her novices a love for their Institute, and respect for its precepts. *We* were taught that our Constitutions are the essence of wisdom, and the Gospel put into the shape in which God would wish *us* to practise it. Now I will confess a fear I have. It is, that you have laboured very little to give your novices a high notion of their Constitutions: and though they may think them very good, still in their eyes they are not the next book to the Scriptures for them."

The Constitutions, which cost so much time and thought and labour, received many years later a high eulogium from an ecclesiastic, who, writing on the subject to a friend said: "As to the system of spiritual life propounded in them (the Constitutions), it is the system of St. Ignatius. You will find it to be high perfection and difficult,

but same time totally practical. The soul formed on it will be truly interior, and will have learned that death to self, by which alone it can begin to live to God, and love Him."

When at moments the Rev. Mother seemed discouraged by the difficulties that encompassed her, the wise and steady friend thus sustained her with animating words :—

"We are not," he says, "to give way to low spirits or sadness. Let not any interior trials affright you. Remember that you are not given up to be the sport of the enemy as he pleases to attack you, but that the strength, measure, and duration are fixed by God, and cannot be increased at the will of our adversary. Ponder this and it will encourage as well as comfort you. Above all other things be not disheartened, it is not alarming to fall into trivial faults, but it is truly alarming to be discouraged by it. Remember I expect faults, and many of them. It would be unwise to imagine that such things will not, nay, must not occur: we should therefore make up our minds to rise speedily, and not commit ten faults because we have had the weakness to be guilty of one . . . . It is easy to be resigned when no cross rests on us;—it is then easy to make generous offerings: but, one act of contentedness at what God appoints when the chalice is offered to our lips, is worth whole months of the other exercise."

Speaking of perseverance in prayer, he says :—

"The little prayer of St. Ignatius is a most useful one: my notion however is that it is difficult to make three or four of these acts in the day 'with a great heart and a willing mind,' but that it is very easy to make one or two hundred.[1] Do not, for the love God, let disgust, or what may appear insincerity in making these acts be a motive for giving them up. Persevere, and God will not fail to impart a rich blessing of success on your exertions. Had F. de la Colombière permitted similar feelings to deter him from eliciting such acts, he never would have reached the height of virtue which now challenges our admiration. . . . . You say it is now your turn to *wait*, you that have been so long *waited for*, and in this humble disposition of soul which must bring down the complacent eyes of God on you, you brave the pains, disgusts, and difficulties you meet in the way of virtue. I scarcely wish, hope I cannot, that you, or I, or any one can have things so much to our liking, or attended with so few disagreeable circumstances, as to falsify the divine words 'through many difficulties we must enter the kingdom of heaven,' but I shall never feel solicitous at your having something to suffer, at your experiencing discouragement, &c., when I see you make this suffering or discouragement a new incitement to union with and dependence on God. Read the 25th ch. 3rd book of the Imitation, and you will understand well my meaning. Do you not think that I and every one else feels at times these disgusts, depression of heart and tedium in the

[1] The little prayer of St. Ignatius spoken of above is as follows :—"Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty—my memory, my understanding, my whole will. Whatever I have or possess Thou hast given me. Behold, O Lord, I restore all to Thee, and commit it wholly to the disposal of thy will. Give me but thy love and thy grace. With these I am rich enough. I ask nothing more of Thee." Pére Jennesseaux says that *take* as well as *receive* is in the original prayer; and that it has a special significance as expressing God's right. *Receive* is added to express the creature's voluntary offering.

way of virtue? But if we make even these a means of acquiring conformity, and in the spirit of sacrifice offer the heart for such feelings, what harm do they do our souls? I shall add that the interior acts I have spoken of, frequently remove the sting of the feeling."

The following extracts from another series of Father St. Leger's letters permit us to divine how great had been the progress of his pupil, and also show how experienced and yet how tender was the hand that guided the wayfarer into those narrow paths along the mountain steeps:—

"You have much reason to thank God for the serenity of mind He has been pleased to bestow on you. May He in his mercy, if such be his holy will, continue at least for a time the favour. This last wish is enough to show you that, though I enjoy the present good, it does not make me exclude the apprehension of future evil. No, the life of a Christian is an unremitting warfare, in which the hand of God may for a while ward off the blows of our adversary, yet his desire is that we often bear the brunt of the battle ourselves. Perhaps you have already experienced, at least occasionally, the truth of what I say, and had to contend with your former enemy. But do not lose courage, still make sacrifices to God, even though your heart belie your words, and you will feel your *will* to be strengthened in good, and peace return to your heart.

"I do not expect that your heart is so detached from things below, as that you can look with the same indifference on health or sickness, on comfort or dereliction, interior or exterior—life or death. But I see in you a spirit that will make you dear to Jesus Christ, and an object of complacency to the court of heaven; a spirit that animates you to give your heart whatever it cost to God, to check it in its desires for his sake, and in the spirit of his holy servants, to offer up not only its comforts, but even its wishes to Him in the perfect spirit of sacrifice. Your health will not admit the pious austerities of the saints, but it will not impede the crucifixion of the yearnings of the heart. Crucify the wish of better health, of comforts you do not enjoy, of being freed from evils you suffer; it would be infidelity to indulge them voluntarily, though it is impossible not to feel them: but they are sources of great merit. Believe me that the meeting every wish with a 'Receive, O Lord,' &c. &c., in the spirit of annihilation of heart, will be more than an heroic act for your poor heart, and will be loading it with a cross heavier than the fasts and watchings of the ancient anchorites. Oh, teach it to love God alone, to be attached tenderly to nothing else: whatever you love to offer yourself daily for the privation of it, whatever you enjoy, take it from Him with the same dependence. You have already had your purgatory, you have worn the crown of thorns, the crown of glory alone awaits you in a better world; but it will daily cost you many a hard struggle.

"I promised you some time since the prayer of F. de la Colombière; I now send it to you. It was not the sacrifice of his relations that gave him most pain. 'There is something, O my God!' he said, 'which costs me infinitely more: it is the sacrifice of my friends; and behold, O Lord, I freely make it, though my heart bleeds as I pronounce the words,' &c. When will your heart raise itself up in the fervorous sincerity of this prayer? I am sure you are learning to realise these happy dispositions in it. But do not imagine that I want you to exclude the comforts of friendship. No; I only want to exclude that affection or attachment which is destructive of peace of mind, or perfect conformity to God's will, and is entertained in

the heart without being offered to God. Enjoy all the comforts of friendship, for they come from God; but enjoy them in such a manner that you offer yourself to be deprived of them whenever it please God to withdraw them. What I say of this wish, I say of every other motion that may arise in it. So that my delight would be to behold you watching the pleasures and displeasures, the comforts and anxieties, the wishes and contradictions, in fine, every motion of your heart in order to offer it in the generous spirit of the little prayer of St. Ignatius. Ah! how little earthly dross could reside in the soul if chastened hourly by the practice of this holy exercise! And how little purgatory would await the soul tried by such mortification!

"I see that you are endeavouring to make progress, and that you are succeeding in your efforts; and I perceive with delight that any little difficulty you meet with is not enough to discourage you. To go on sweetly when the grace of God supports us is but a trifling triumph over nature; but to persevere in the sacrifice of our hearts and wills, to curb every wish that may arise when the sensible comfort of grace is withdrawn, is no despicable act of mortification. And, I trust, that God in his mercy will strengthen and enable you to offer up hourly to the Lord, amidst desolation no less than consolation, the grateful sacrifice of a heart that knows not what it is to form a wish except for Him and in Him. You say I did well to add a comment on the prayer of La Colombière, and seem as if you thought I was smoothing down matters only in compliment to you. It is by no means the case. I allow you to seek, as your Saviour did, a portion of human comfort after first raising your heart to heaven, and to ask these little consolations to "stay with you an hour:" but it must be done in submission in the hour of trial; and, when the soul enjoys peace and quiet she must by many an act acquire a detachment from them: in fine the disposition contained in the 15th chap., 3rd book of the Imitation, which you can read at your leisure. It will show you what I mean, and at the same time prove that I was not merely making concessions to your weakness. As I am very anxious that you should persevere in this holy and meritorious exercise of the holocaust of the heart, I shall suggest another manner of doing it in the spirit of poverty. You gave up worldly wealth, and for fear of attachment to it you now refuse yourself what is not necessary, and keep nothing without leave. Strip your heart in like manner of its wishes, its desires, its affections, and keep none of them in it without leave of your Divine Spouse, Jesus Christ, who has taken the dominion of it. Do not say that this is an exercise of familiarlty fit only for saints. *Sursum corda*, I say to you in the language of the Church; raise up your heart with confidence to God; seek without fear a devout converse and union with Him, and be assured He will not repulse you. One of your victories must be over that pusillanimity which keeps you from seeking His conversation, and consequently from seeing that it has no bitterness or tedium in it, and which prevents you from reflecting that the heavenly words of the Redeemer were addressed not only to his saints and apostles, but even to Samaritans, publicans, and sinners, who enjoyed his sweet company and conversation, and were not driven away when they sought to be sharers in it."

During Mrs. Aikenhead's visit Rahan Lodge was by no means a solitude. The Tullabeg College and the Presentation Convent excited much interest as new foundations of great promise, and attracted many visitors to the neighbourhood. Dr. Murray spent some time at the Lodge; that fine specimen of an Irish gentleman of continental culture, Dr. Plunket, Bishop of Meath, had his head-quarters in the same hospitable house during his visitation of the western part of the

diocese ; and Dr. Curtis, lately president of the Irish College at Salamanca, and soon to be named to the primacy of Ireland, came there too. Miss O'Brien,[1] though now over fifty years of age, was making preparations to enter the convent she had helped to found; and Father St. Leger's widowed mother and his young sister were about to take the same step. The remembrance of past times, the rich promise of the future, the vigorous work of the present hour vivified the atmosphere; and the intense Catholic life—so peaceful and unobtrusive in its operation—which permeated all, was congenial and invigorating in no small degree to the Superior of the Sisters of Charity, who knew that the best part of her work still lay before her.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SECOND FOUNDATION—VISITORS FROM YORK—FIRST MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

AFTER a sojourn of more than two months at Rahan, Mrs. Aikenhead returned to her convent, much restored in health, greatly strengthened by Father St. Leger's spiritual instructions, and full of hope since he had promised his constant and utmost help in training the future members of the congregation. She now set herself to accomplish what her illness had delayed, namely, the separation of the novices from the professed sisters. Father Kenny had suggested this step, Father St. Leger urged its execution, and Dr. Murray fully coincided in their views. The very best opportunity that could be hoped for occurred when Mrs. O'Brien and the ladies who were associated with her in the care of the refuge, which in 1814 had been removed from Ash-street to Stanhope-street, pressed the Sisters of Charity to make a foundation at the latter place, and take charge of the Institution. The house indeed was small, but there was ground enough for building on. Dr. Murray undertook to raise funds for the erection of chapel and cells : a task that was rendered comparatively easy by the generosity of the friend who had supplied him with money for the additions he had made to the convent in North William-street. The greater part of a sum of £1,000, which was immediately placed at his

[1] Miss O'Brien, in religion Sister Mary Clare, a truly kind and generous friend to the Sisters of Charity, died in the convent at Rahan in 1827. Father St. Leger in announcing her death, says: "Her sufferings were unparalleled except by the heroic and truly religious patience with which they were borne. I never went to her of late without a mixture of awe and admiration. She was a martyr not only in suffering, but also in sanctity."

disposal, was given by this worthy friend in need, Miss Denis. The additions were already in progress when Mrs. Aikenhead returned from Rahan in September, and the building was carried on vigorously during the succeeding two months.

In November, Father Kenny gave the general retreat to the community in North William-street. The intructions, as on the two previous occasions, were in the chapel, and a few ladies, friends of the sisters and of the institution, were allowed to be present. Mother Catherine, who kept a quaint little diary at this period, remarks that these friends had never before heard such discourses as Father Kenny delivered during this retreat, nor had the community—except from the same person. Another constant friend to whom the community were singularly indebted at this time was Dr. Everard, Archbishop of Mytelene and coadjutor in the see of Cashel. The sisters held him in the very highest respect, ranked him among their best benefactors, and prayed daily that Almighty God might fill him more and more with his own Spirit.

On Sunday, the 17th of January, 1819, the professed sisters, four in number, renewed their vows at Mass, celebrated in the convent by Archbishop Everard; a few days later Dr. Murray announced his intention of sending some of the community to the House of Refuge in Stanhope-street; and on the evening of the 29th the Rev. Mother and Sister Mary Joseph O'Reilly were conveyed there by Mrs. O'Brien. It was a cold, dreary evening; everything had been upset by the building operations; and the impression made on the new inmates was anything but cheerful. However, with the assistance of three young women who were in the House of Refuge as aids, order was so far established that on the 2nd of February, the Feast of the Purification, Dr. Murray celebrated the first Mass in the new chapel, and blessed the house. After the ceremony the Archbishop of Mytelene, the priests of the parish, and a few of the secular friends of the institution, breakfasted with Dr. Murray, to whom this day also was a day of exultation. In succeeding years it was his custom to say Mass for the sisters on that festival, regarding it as the foundation day of the house, which, from that date was called the Convent of the Purification. The three young women who had helped to arrange matters in the new establishment, were on that day received as postulants in the rank of domestic sisters. One of the number did not persevere, but the others lived and died edifying and useful members of the congregation. After the function in Stanhope-street, Dr. Murray went to North William-street, where he gave the habit to Sister Mary Paul O'Reilly. In a few days she and the other two novices, Sister Mary Peter Gernon, and Sister Mary Jerome Corbally, joined the Rev. Mother, who thus entered on her office of mistress of novices in the new foundation, with four novices first-class, and three

domestic postulants. Before the end of the year six young ladies entered the noviceship, of whom only two remained, Sister Mary John Cahill, and Sister Mary Ignatius Sweetman.

In the convent at North William-street remained three professed sisters, namely, the rectress, Mother Catherine Walsh ; Sister Mary de Sales Clinch ; Sister Mary Aloysius Clinch ; and one domestic candidate, Mary Whelan, afterwards Sister Mary Magdalen, a highly valued member of the congregation. All went on there during the year in a peaceful round of prayer and work. Dr. Murray sang High Mass in the little chapel on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and Father Kenny preached there for the benefit of the orphans on the following Sunday. Mother Catherine notes that the sermon was worthy of the subject and the preacher ; "and oh!" she exclaims, "may the Lord in his mercy preserve this holy and matchless man!" Great was the regret of the whole community when they learned almost immediately after, that this "matchless man," who had been their confessor and friend for nearly three years, was to sail for America in a few days. He was succeeded as confessor by Father Esmonde of the Society of Jesus.

As the house could now receive aid from the novices and postulants sent thither from Stanhope-street, it became possible to extend the sphere of usefulness. On the 11th of August, Mother Catherine and Sister Mary de Sales went for the first time to visit Jervis-street Hospital. In the little chronicle it is noted that Mrs. John O'Brien accompanied the nuns ; "and here," adds the writer, "I will not omit mentioning the great advantages the Sisters of Charity have derived from the acquaintance of that admirable lady. She has been a benefactress and a model of edification to them." The visitation of the hospital was continued without intermission until in after years the entire superintendence of the institution was undertaken by the Sisters of Mercy. About the same time the Rev. Mother and Sister Mary Paul O'Reilly went from Stanhope-street to the parochial schools in Abbey-street to open a Sunday-school. The sisters also undertook the religious instruction of the day-schools, which afterwards were removed to King's Inns-street, placed under the Board of Education, and given into the charge of the Sisters of Charity.

The next public or official invitation which the sisters received to extend their charitable work, was in the spring of 1821, when the governor of Kilmainham Gaol requested Dr. Murray to send the nuns to visit two young women, who, having been convicted of murder, were in prison under sentence of death. The Rev. Mother and Mother Catherine at once responded to this sad summons. They were accompanied on their first visit by the Rev. Andrew Ennis, and by Mrs. O'Brien ; afterwards they went alone. They were treated by

the governor and the officials, all Protestants as a matter of course in those days, with the greatest respect and consideration; and were aided in their solemn task of preparing the condemned for death by the Rev. Andrew Lubé, the parish priest of St. James's, and his curate, the Rev. William Yore, whose frequent and consolatory visits soon brought to the desired state of mind the poor women who, penetrated with compunction for their crime, accepted the punishment they were to undergo in atonement for it. One of the unhappy young women had lived in Clarence-street, close to the convent in North William-street, and the nuns had often visited at her house. On the morning of the execution Mrs. Aikenhead and Mother Catherine attended, and conducted the poor women to the chapel where the doomed creatures and their consoling visitors remained from nine o'clock till two, the hour appointed for the execution. When the women were led out by the governor, the nuns remained in the chapel, and did not leave it until two hours after the execution. The parting scene had been very trying. The Rev. Mr. Yore went with the condemned to the place of execution—"the drop at Kilmainham" on the outer wall of the prison; and remained with them to the last moment, sending his prayer with theirs up to the throne of mercy. The impression that scene made on the good priest's mind was never effaced. Long years after he described the horrifying shock he experienced when, emerging from the prison enclosure into the broad light of the outer world, he beheld a sea of faces turned upwards, and thousands of eyes as it seemed fixed on the doomed women, and the priest who stood by their side.

At the request of the governor the Sisters of Charity continued their visits to the gaol in favour of the other prisoners, and went regularly on Sundays, and oftener if there were dying cases in the infirmary, until on the introduction of the solitary system they got notice to discontinue their visits to Kilmainham.

In the month of May of the same year (1821) Father Kenny returned to Ireland, having rendered highly important services to the American mission, whither he had been sent as visitor by the General of the Society of Jesus. His return was a joy to rich and poor, priests and people; a great blessing to the Sisters of Charity; and a source of real consolation to the William-street community. He soon visited Mother Catherine, gave the convent a precious relic of the true Cross, and resumed his office of confessor.

About this time Mrs. Aikenhead, at Dr. Murray's desire, gave hospitality to three of the York nuns who were about to found a branch of their Order in Ireland. These were Mrs. Ball, the "little treasure" alluded to in an already inserted letter from Dr. Murray to Mrs. Coyney, and now a professed nun; Miss Arthur, and Miss Therry, both novices. The stay of the pious visitors was prolonged

to some months, owing to delays in getting possession of the house they had fixed on for a convent. In the interval, however, the two novices were professed for their own institute, in the chapel of the Stanhope-street convent; and finally, when the delay seemed to threaten undue extension, Mrs. Ball and her companions engaged a temporary dwelling at Harold's-cross, and, having removed thither, waited until the country seat of Mr. Grierson, the King's printer, should be ready for its transformation from the scene of high living, which the poet Moore knew so well, into the cloistral retreat of Loretto Abbey. Dr. Murray, in a letter to Mrs. Aikenhead after the departure from Stanhope-street of these interesting and grateful guests, speaks of the kindness of the hospitality she showed them.

The death of the venerable Archbishop of Dublin on the 11th of May, 1823, called Dr. Murray to the archiepiscopal throne of that see. The Sisters of Charity, the congregation so dear to his heart, felt now more than ever assured that the favours and privileges so earnestly desired and so patiently waited for would be obtained from Rome. To the Rev. Walter Meyler, who went to the Eternal City in the month of February, 1824, the copy of the Constitutions drawn up for Propaganda was entrusted. But Rome is proverbially slow in advancing matters of weighty import; and all who were interested so deeply in the confirmation of the new institute had still to wait patiently for some years before their ardent desires were accomplished.

From 1819 until 1826 Mrs. Aikenhead resided in Stanhope-street, and, leaving the convent in North William-street and all its works in the very efficient hands of Mother Catherine, devoted herself mainly to the task of training the younger members of the now steadily increasing congregation; without, however, neglecting the visitation and relief of the poor in their homes, or any of the other extern duties of a Sister of Charity. The industrial branches of the Refuge continued for a few years to be carried on by a secular matron assisted by domestic sisters. Washing and needlework done by the young girls of the Refuge brought in some funds for their support. The ladies of the committee, Mrs. O'Brien and her friends, laboured with unabated zeal to support the establishment; and when it became necessary to enlarge the house, these devoted friends went through the city and its environs and collected from the charitable the funds that were required.

About this period the devotions of the month of May were performed in Stanhope-street, the beautiful exercises of that season in honour of the Blessed Virgin being thus inaugurated in Ireland. Long before any book of the devotions appeared in English, Mrs. Aikenhead had a translation made of an Italian work which treated of the subject, and wrote out with her own hand the directions for the proper observance of the devotions when performed in public.

During this interval the Rev. Mother and some of her community had an opportunity of enjoying a breath of pure country air. Sister Mary Ignatius Sweetman, who had been about five years in Stanhope-street, began to show signs of great delicacy, and the physicians judged that in entire change of air lay her only chance of recovery. Her father took a house for her at Porterstown, a pretty rural place about three miles from Dublin; and Dr. Murray gave permission for her going there, with the express understanding that it should not be considered a precedent, since it was only granted in consequence of the congregation not having any house in the country. Another delicate sister went with the invalid, and the Rev. Mother frequently spent a day or two with them. The sojourners had many of the spiritual comforts of a convent. They had Mass in their little oratory every day, and Dr. Murray allowed them the privilege of having the Blessed Sacrament reserved there. After some months, however, all hope of restoration to health had to be given up. Sister M. Ignatius died on the feast of the Archangel Michael, September 29, 1824; and the congregation lost in her an edifying and efficient member. Some time before her illness, she had been placed in charge of the Refuge on the dismissal of the matron; and already she had by dint of great devotion and great labour effected considerable improvements in the working of the institution. The generous spirit in which she went through the fatiguing, wearying routine of the office she filled, was the more admirable as she had been brought up in all the ease and luxury of a refined and affluent home.[1]

All this time Mrs. Aikenhead enjoyed the greatest blessing which, in her position as novice mistress, she could have desired—the counsel and the help at every turn of wise and zealous friends. Dr. Murray's visits were always, as he himself said, at her command whenever they were wanted. Nor did he wait to be sent for. He sometimes even made choice of the convent chapel for the performance of a solemn and interesting function; as for instance when in June, 1825, he conferred on three successive days sub-deacon's, deacon's, and priest's orders on John, the specially beloved brother of Father Robert St. Leger. The last of these three days was the Feast of St. John Francis Regis, a day of particular devotion in the society to which the brothers St. Leger belonged.

Father Kenny grudged neither time nor trouble when he had it in his power to render a service to the congregation, either in his own person, or through the instrumentality of those members of the society who were under his obedience. During several years the general

[1] For an interesting account of the Sweetman family, of whom was John S. Sweetman of the United Irish Society, see the 4th Series of Dr. R. R. Madden's "United Irishmen." They have for many generations been remarkable for commercial enterprise, good citizenship, and strong Catholic feeling.

retreat and the triduum of the congregation were, with Father Kenny's permission, conducted by Father St. Leger, and this at times when the absence from his college of the Rector of Tullabeg was, to say the least, an inconvenience. "It would be to me," writes Father Kenny, in a letter to Mrs. Aikenhead, dated Clongowes, October 9, 1822, "and I am sure to all of us, a subject of consolation to render any service in our power to your houses, which have on our ministry a strong claim for the assistance which you give it, and the dangers to which you are exposed in this most meritorious co-operation." And in the same letter he refers in a special manner to a little service which the sisters had it then in their power to render the Fathers at their establishment in Hardwick-street. "When," he adds, "you see good Mother Catherine and community say to her and them that I shall always recollect with gratitude her charitable attention to our little chapel; and hope that they will ever remember me and all concerns under my care."

Father Kenny was constantly employed in giving retreats to the secular clergy, to religious communities, and to colleges and confraternities. His meditations were highly valued, and those who benefitted by his labours oftentimes noted his line of thought and strove to preserve his words; while some few who had seen the manuscript notes Father Kenny brought to Ireland from the Sicilian novitiate, made imperfect copies of them. These, again, being lent to others, underwent a second and a third transcription, with variations each time. The consequence was that Father Kenny's meditations, so styled, could hardly be recognised by their author. Mrs. Aikenhead, however, possessed a transcript from notes taken by the sisters which she carefully treasured. Father Kenny said it was the most correct copy he had seen for a long time. In fact on one occasion he was very grateful for a loan of her version of his meditations; and on returning the papers to the convent he took the opportunity of intimating that he might again have occasion to solicit the favour of seeing them. Father Kenny's meditations, though not specially composed for different states of life, had such grace about them that all who followed them felt as if they wondrously met their own particular needs. Mrs. Aikenhead seems to have thought they were intended for religious; but he does not leave her under that misapprehension. "You will believe me, I am sure," he says in a letter of the 26th July, 1826, "that the idea of compiling a retreat for nuns never once entered my head. Had I leisure I should not refuse to do so much for the benefit of coachmen or coalporters, but I would wait a very strong indication of the divine will, before I should choose such a favoured class of God's servants as the objects of such labour." But for all that he would sit down and spend an hour of his valuable time in giving the sisters a practical lesson on the way of

making their meditation. Mrs. Aikenhead, in referring at a later period to his instructions on this point, said, that the first time she ever heard of such a thing as St. Ignatius's second method of prayer was, when Father Kenny spent an hour as it were making his prayer aloud, and explaining as he went on.

Father St. Leger, anxiously engaged though he was at the head of the establishment at Tullabeg, not only found time to give, as already said, the spiritual exercises, and conduct the triduum at Stanhope-street, but managed to keep up the correspondence begun at Rahan; and the Rev. Mother had the comfort of knowing that in all doubts, perplexities, and emergencies, she had in the Rector of St. Stanislaus the wisest and kindest of friends to apply to for counsel and help. There can be no doubt that if the younger members of the congregation were taught by an excellent novice mistress, the latter was at the same time under the training of a master spirit. Thus she acquired the knowledge, which so many others have gained that the very best way of succeeding as a teacher is by always continuing a learner oneself. Father Robert's idea of the kind of young ladies who do not make good Sisters of Charity, may be gathered from a part of his correspondence referring to the proposed admission of a candidate who had the reputation of being a literary character, and who appears to have been a person of educated intelligence and of fascinating manners. Her literary reputation would in all probability have raised no difficulty, had there not been a certain assumption in the lady's manner, and a high flavour of the pure-literature style in her letters. The Rev. Mother had her misgivings: Father St. Leger's apprehensions were seriously aroused.

"I read Miss ——'s letter with pleasure," he says, "for she writes extremely well. There is a spiritedness and playful buoyancy in her style that is very agreeable. I thought, however, that it was the letter of one who wanted wherewith to fill a sheet of paper. She seemed, I know not how, constrained. I hope you wrote very clearly in the same style as your last. Recommend her to learn how to knit stockings, and while doing so to reflect on St. James's doctrine of bridling the tongue. But in earnest, I hope you spoke of the essential requisites of a Sister of Charity, and detailed at length what must be her future occupations; that is a series of deeds utterly incompatible with her former pursuits: a line of life that will entirely preclude the continuance of an intercourse, that she, I fear, will find it hard to abandon. If Miss —— be not a truly mortified religious, I can promise you she will be very mortifying to those who are over her, and very injurious to the community at large and to individuals."

Again he writes on the same subject:—

"On Miss —— I can only say that in the present stage of the business it is only left for you to tell her that you recommend a serious discussion (with herself) of her own feelings, inclinations, and capabilities. If they bear stamped on them the mark of a heavenly impress, fitting her for your

vocation, and if at the same time her will be disposed to obey the divine decree, then your doors and your heart are open to admit her. But beg that she investigate these two matters until she feel a strong moral conviction of the existence of both in her; then, but not till then, recommend her to take [a] decisive step. I say this because one or two sentiments in her letter seem to require the present admonition."

Many more letters were written by the lady, who also had interviews with Mrs. Aikenhead. But Father St. Leger's unfavourable impressions were only confirmed by the additional information he received from the Rev. Mother, and by the opinions he heard other persons express who were acquainted with the lady's intention of entering the congregation.

"Mr. D——," he writes, "cannot bear the notion of her joining you. To tell the truth, I do not relish it either. Write, I entreat, in a way to let her see that you would prize more domestic than literary accomplishments, that her most useful preparation for you would be to learn to sew and to knit, if she be not already a proficient in those feminine arts, and that without such accomplishments, literary excellence would be at best a useless incumbrance, nay, a mischievous qualification in your vocation. Remind her of your most glorious appellation, 'Servants of the poor of Christ,' and the import of your vow to *serve* the poor. The arts which immediately tend to this are your proper business, those that do not *directly* tend to it are at best undesirable. I said *directly*, because in your present confined numbers all must be the active servants of the poor, *immediately* engaged in procuring them spiritual and temporal consolation: therefore authoresses, even of good books, can have no place *now* among you. Oh! what I dread is, the change of sentiment she may introduce; and that she may infuse the spirit of esteem for the persuasive words of human wisdom, and not the simple effusions of the heart uuited to God by prayer and mortification. Tell her you want sempstresses not writers. Do write clearly to her—for God's sake do. If she consent she may be innocent among you; I never expect much more from her."

Later on he returns to the subject:—

"I am uneasy about Miss ——. God grant she may never import into the congregation the contemptible and mischievous vanity of being but indifferent to needlework, contemning the detail of economy, and affecting the high lady. I admired the Marchioness of Wellesley in the Viceregal Lodge measuring the altar for Mr. Glynn, and cutting the lengths with her own scissors for him; and I pitied Miss —— flourishing her fingers in Mrs. G——'s parlour, and affecting to deplore how much she regretted her want of cleverness in those feminine occupations. Write to her on the subject and put the business you have to do in a proper light."

But fearing he might be misunderstood, or supposed to set little value on ady-like refinement of manner and ideas, Father St. Leger takes another occasion to make his views quite clear:—

"I think it necessary," he says, "to make a remark on a word in my last letter. I spoke as if you did not want *ladies*. By ladies I meant silly women who by way of being ladies would not know how to make a

*shift*, except to tell a lie for the purpose of getting out of a humiliation or the like, and then they could make a very good one. But of all Orders in the Church you, I think, stand most in need of persons formed by education and habit as well as by virtue to the strictest delicacy of sentiment: and this alone can (of human means) prevent you from contracting a certain grossness of idea from the scenes you daily witness." [1]

Mrs. Aikenhead, who was fond of remarking that accomplishments were no burden, and who never lost her love for what was intrinsically elegant and refined, knew well that certain downright practical qualities were essential in a Sister of Charity: who should have a capacity for business, or at any rate a real love for work. "Persons," she once said, "who think nothing more is necessary for our vocation than being able to walk about and distribute alms, and talk, even well, in the way of instruction, are unfit for us. If I could, no one should be aggregated in future who has not a real spirit of labour; and if not well endowed with capabilities for account-keeping, economy, and management of household concerns, who will be at least willing to spend herself in assisting to the best of her abilities such as are." In fine, the union of constant, laborious, practical work with the highest spirituality and the strictest interior discipline was the Mother's ideal of a Sister of Charity.

Doubtless some may have thought that the strictness of the interior discipline would prove too severe a strain for women to bear; and that it was hardly wise to impose on the weaker sex at once the hard toil of active charity, and that subjection of spirit which would appear to come more within the scope of masculine strength of endurance, and to accord better with the spirit of certain religious orders of men. But Mrs. Aikenhead remained unshaken in her opinion that both could be united; and in this was strongly supported by Father St. Leger, and also by the archbishop, who declared it to be his conviction that "Sisters of Charity should be more interior than other religious." The result soon showed that too much was not attempted. The training of the novitiate did not over-strain the delicate and sympathetic intellectual constitution of women; but it supplied much of that mental strength and culture, which, it is so often said, a course of logic and rhetoric would develop in the gentler sex. Women of a naturally robust and vivacious intellectual fibre, developed into a noble and beautiful type of character under a system of training which aimed most of all at the quickening of the spiritual life; and women, who had seemed in the world ungifted and unimportant, often surprised their old friends by the capacities they displayed as Sisters

[1] In 1834, Father St. Leger was sent on an important mission to India. He returned to Ireland after some years in very delicate health; and died in 1857. He ranks foremost among the benefactors of the congregation, who will ever remember him as one to whom a deep debt of gratitude is owing.

of Charity. Indeed, when the new congregation came before the world as it did ere long, under various and trying circumstances, many persons wondered how it was that so many very superior women happened to be congregated together. It was observed that the Sisters of Charity had the understanding of men, and were fit for any position in the world.

Among those who entered the congregation in the first decade of its existence there was a considerable diversity of age and character. Various also were the circumstances of the previous life of those first Sisters of Charity. It was not unusual for members of the same family to hear the call to religious life and desire to wear the same habit. There were sisters in the community of the name of Lynch, Clynch, Chamberlain, Holmes, O'Reilly, and Aikenhead: for the Rev. Mother's gentle sister Anne, after the marriage of their sister Margaret to Dr. Hickson of Killarney, forsook the world and entered the novitiate in Stanhope-street. A few were young, not over twenty years of age; but most of the first members of the congregation had reached a much more mature age; and some were widows. Among the latter was Mrs. Corbally, who on an occasion was lovingly described by one of the sisterhood as, "a great, genuine, good little soul; always gay and most devoted; and who did great things for the House of Refuge."

Mrs. Coleman, also a widow, destined to hold for very many years an important position in the congregation, was one of the early band of Sisters of Charity. She was about thirty-two years of age when she entered, full of energy and intellect, and most agreeable in appearance and manner. She was born in the troubled times that preceded '98. Her father, a gentleman-farmer in Meath or Louth, more patriotic than prudent, was suspected of disaffection to the government. On the very night that his little daughter was to come into the world, the house was surrounded by a troop of armed men, whose heavy footsteps, presently heard on the stairs, gave the alarm to the inmates, who hurried away "the poor mistress" under cover of the darkness to an uninhabited hut sometimes used by the herd. She gave up all for lost, and resigned herself to die, knowing well that no human assistance awaited her there in the hour of her utmost need. Her piety was sincere, her faith was strong, and she had an ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin. As her husband forced open the door, and led her into the dark hut, she heard a voice distinctly say: "Do not fear, Mary, I will protect you and your child;" while at the same time a bright light filled the place. Then and there, under its influence the child was born. All appears to have gone well after that. The little girl grew up, and was married early to a gentleman in good circumstances living in Drogheda. After a few years of married life he died. It was not long until religious life attracted the

widow. She and her great friend Miss Mary Ennis, then a fine young woman, handsome and gifted, felt the call of grace about the same time, and resolved to enter the newly-instituted congregation, of which they both became highly-valued members. They were destined to run their race for half a century together: not in the same place, but in a nearly similar career.

Mrs. Coleman and Miss Ennis were not the only pair in the congregation, who, having been bosom friends in the world, became Sisters of Charity at this early period, and lived and died under the same obedience, if not actually under the same convent roof. Anne Aikenhead, for instance, had not been long in the convent when her dear friend and cousin, Mary Hennessy, followed her. This lady was a great acquisition to the new institute, and especially to its schools: for she was gifted with a clear understanding, a methodical mind, and an immense power of work. She had received an excellent education at the Ursuline convent; and being fond of reading, and constantly with her relatives, Mr. James Roche and his family, she continued to lay in a store of information during the period that succeeded her school life. At the same time active charity had its attractions for her, and she loved to teach and help the poor. Once being in delicate health she was ordered for change of air to Cove (now Queenstown), which was then a mere hamlet principally inhabited by fishermen and their families. It was not long until she remarked that the mending of the nets caused much trouble and expense to the men; and she saw at once that the work could very well be done by the girls of the village. Thereupon she made a great netting-needle herself, and taught some of the children to mend their fathers' nets. She instructed others in the art of lace making, and had the satisfaction of knowing in after years that several of her pupils attained to great proficiency in this kind of work and were enabled to earn considerable sums by their tasteful industry.

For a few years she went much into society with her sister Mrs. Coxon; and often spent some time in London at the house of her uncle, Colonel Hennessy. Altogether her life was varied and she thoroughly enjoyed it. How it was that her thoughts first turned to religious life we cannot tell; but when she made up her mind to try her vocation in a convent, the resolve did not seem to cause her the painful struggle which, under similar circumstances, others have had to encounter. She had been staying on a visit with Mrs. O'Brien, and entered the noviceship from that lady's house, in the highest spirits with herself and the world in general. From the very first she excelled in everything she was put to, and took extreme pains to improve herself. Even in what might be called her worldly days she had been accustomed to instruct catechism classes in the chapels; but on entering religion she set about cultivating her talent for

teaching in right earnest, and soon reached a high proficiency in an art essentially useful in the congregation she had joined.

We have mentioned but a few of the early members of Mrs. Aikenhead's community, choosing those who may be considered types of different classes, and whose names are most likely to reappear in our history.

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## CHAPTER V.

### CORK REVISITED—CONVENT ESTABLISHED—GARDINER-STREET SCHOOLS—SANDYMOUNT.

MEANWHILE Mary Aikenhead had not been forgotten in Cork, nor had its people ceased to inquire with vivid interest concerning the progress of the great work she was engaged in organising. She was now about to be recalled to her native city to found there a convent of Sisters of Charity, and so to realise her own beautiful early dream. The going forth with tears had then been after all only the first step on the round-about road by which she was to return with joyfulness carrying her sheaves. During her stay at York, Mr. Timothy Mahony, a member of a highly respectable and eminently charitable family, died, leaving, among other bequests to the poor of Cork, a sum of money for the foundation of a convent of the Sisters of Charity in the city. According to his original idea this good man set aside a child's portion for the nuns; that sum was subsequently increased by the falling in of a portion of the fortune of one of his children who had died; and thus at the time of his decease, which occurred while Mrs. Aikenhead was at York, the sum total he bequeathed to her amounted to £3,300. This was invested and left to accumulate until the time should come when the work could be commenced: the testator's brother, Mr. Martin Mahony, kindly transacting whatever business arose in connection with the trust.

Dr. Murphy, who had been appointed to the see of Cork soon after the death of Dr. Moylan,[1] was very anxious that the foundation should be made; but it was impossible to do so while the congregation was only in the beginning of its work, and still limited in number. However, in the year 1826, Dr. Murphy having urgently renewed his request that a community of sisters should be sent to Cork, the archbishop directed the necessary arrangements to be made; and in the

[1] Dr. Moylan died on the 10th of February, 1815, aged eighty years. He was buried in the cathedral he had erected on the site of the old "bishop's chapel;" Mr. James Roche wrote his epitaph; and a handsome monument by the Italian artist, Turnerelli, was erected to his memory in the sacred edifice.

month of September of that year, Dr. Murphy came to Dublin for the purpose of accompanying to Cork Mrs. Aikenhead and Sister Mary Regis Teeling, who were to precede the regular colony and to reside in the bishop's house until the tenement destined for the sisters should be ready for their reception.

On the 25th of September, the travellers arrived at their destination, and Mary Aikenhead in the still glow of an autumn evening saw again, as the carriage drove into the city, all the familiar features of her birthplace: the quays, the bridge, the glancing river, Shandon steeple upon the heights. She recognised the bright kindly faces, and heard, not without emotion, the soft southern Corkonian brogue. There were old friends among the rich and poor who longed to see her face again; but John Rorke, in whose cottage her cradle had been rocked, resolved that none should get before him with their greeting. He was determined to have the first word with "Miss Mary," and he went to the bishop's house, and stood in the hall ready to receive her. When the carriage drew up, and the hall-door opened, the first thing she saw on alighting was the face of her childhood's friend. Time, and place, and the Rev. Motherhood were all forgotten in a moment. "O Daddy John!" she cried; and throwing her arms round his neck she kissed her dear old foster father; while the bishop's servant, who stood by, with his best manners on, and wholly unprepared for this scene, lifted up his hands in amazement to see the greeting which took place between Daddy John and the great "Mother Abbess" from Dublin.

The bishop's house had not much of the atmosphere of a convent about it, but it had a literary and learned air, which was the next best thing. It was not merely provided with a library: it was a library in itself from top to bottom. Mrs. Aikenhead, who had a kindly regard even for the outside of books, could not but enjoy the close companionship of the ancient folios piled on the lobbies; the regiments of calf and vellum-bound octavos marshalled on shelves in every available space; the Irish manuscripts stored in cases; and the bibliographical riches that adorned the walls, and strewed the tables of every room in the mansion.[1]

The house which was intended for the sisters' habitation—no one can now tell why it was chosen—stood close by the cathedral, in the vicinity of the presbytery, and surrounded by lanes and the crowded dwellings of the poor. It was no easy matter to get the domicile into

[1] The German traveller Kohl gives an amusing description of Dr. Murphy's house. Not only, he says, are the bishop's sitting-rooms and dining-rooms filled with books, but even in his bedrooms every spare place is similarly occupied. His attendants, and even his maid-servants sleep in little libraries. The walls of his stair-case and the corridors of his rooms are filled with books up to the very garrets. His house contains the largest collection of books in Ireland, and is rich in costly and interesting works.—"Travels in Ireland."

order. It was of no particular style of architecture; but was high, narrow, crooked, with ladder-like stairs, a questionable roof, and walls which all the whitewash in the world could not coax into looking secure. There was no garden attached to this tenement, nor was there even a good yard. People looked at it in passing by and called it a gazebo, a rattle-trap, a castle-rack rent. The Sisters of Charity, not liking to give a hard name even to a tumble-down pile of this kind, called it, among themselves, "Cork Castle." The Rev. Mother's heart must have sunk at the thought of this being a convent. But she was never the first to see a lion in the way: it was well to make a beginning under any circumstances, and surely this was to be only a temporary settlement.

While the preparations in the "Castle" were still going on, Mrs. Aikenhead and Mrs. Teeling did not travel much outside the precincts of the neighbouring lanes, unless when some kind friend came and took them in a carriage elsewhere. It was considered better not to begin the regular visitation of the sick until the work should be formally inaugurated on the arrival of the community from Dublin. But this did not prevent Mrs. Aikenhead going to see some of her dear old people, when she could do so without having to walk through the streets, where the sight of a nun would have caused no small astonishment. One day, passing along Pope's-quay, she said to her companion, pointing to one of the houses: "Do you know how I went to my last party in that house?—In a boat, my dear!"

Of course an early visit was paid to Mary Rorke, whose dwelling was now in Peacock-lane. Fifty years after this visit of the Rev. Mother to her nurse, the details were related in full by Mary Rorke's granddaughter, who was a child when the event took place. The little girl had met with an accident, having been badly burned, and was at her grandmother's; when, suddenly one day she saw a carriage drive into the lane and stop at the door—"and a lovely nun get out, accompanied by another nun and a priest; and the first nun went over to the granny and kissed her, and there was great joy: for it was Miss Mary come from Dublin! And there was another old woman in the room at the time, and the granny said: "Don't you remember Mary Lyons, your own kitchen-maid?" and Miss Mary put out her hand to her; but the old woman was not for shaking hands, because she was after dressing the wounds; but Miss Mary insisted." The child never afterwards forgot that scene, nor the beautiful-looking woman whom the granny called "Miss Mary."

After six weeks had elapsed the convent was ready, and the community who were to be established in it left Dublin for Cork. These were Sister Mary de Sales Clinch, Sister Mary Aloysius Clinch, Sister Mary Austin Quan, and Sister Mary Anne Ignatius Aikenhead. The travellers set out on the morning of the 3rd of November under the

escort of Father Charles Aylmer of the Society of Jesus, who was going to preach the Jubilee in Cork; and on the evening of the second day's journey, namely, the 4th of November, they arrived in the city, where the bishop had vehicles to meet them at the coach office, and convey them to his hospitable mansion. There they dined with his Lordship, in company with the clergyman of the parish who had been invited to meet them. In the evening the six nuns took possession of the new convent. Next morning, Sunday, the sisters, having assisted at the Bishop's Mass at the cathedral, breakfasted with his Lordship, Dr. Murphy, and afterwards drove, accompanied by his Lordship and Father Aylmer, to Blackrock, where they spent the day with the Ursuline nuns. What a joy it was, this meeting of old friends! what a pleasure to talk over past times, give thanks together for present blessings, and look forward to the realisation at a no distant future of long-cherished hopes! It was delightful to Mrs. Aikenhead to find the dear Ursulines no longer in an obscure crowded part of the city, but in a handsome country seat on the banks of the Lee, with quiet surroundings for the nuns, and ample pleasure-grounds for the pupils of their largely-frequented school to roam through freely. The nuns had removed with their numerous charge some three or four years before to this desirable residence. The centre part of the group of convent buildings, a fine mansion, had once been the country-seat of the unfortunate Henry Sheares. Over the hall-door, some time after the nuns had taken possession, a date was discovered on the removal of a coat of paint or plaster, which strangely enough proved to be 1771, the very year in which the Ursulines—a contraband freight—were landed on the banks of the Lee from France. Mrs. Aikenhead found the pious friends of her youth twelve years older certainly, but still the sweet, bright, beautiful characters she had always known them. There was Mother Borgia MacCarthy, still exercising the same powerful unconscious fascination which had held so many in the right way and drawn so many to God. And there was Mother Louis Moylan, now superioress, as she had already often been. In all Mary Aikenhead's twelve years' experience of religious life she had met no more beautiful character than this venerable mother of the Ursulines, whose gentle maternal ways had attracted her childish affection; whose quick and helpful sympathy had made her a friend in girlhood; and whose noble qualities of heart and soul now drew still closer to her the Sister of Charity's maturer nature.[1] Many other valued friends still

[1] The venerable and well-beloved Mother Louis Moylan survived till 1842, when she died at the age of ninety years, having spent seventy-two in religion. When Mrs. Aikenhead heard of her death she cried bitterly. A dear friend, a future Ursuline, seeing her grief, expressed some surprise. "Did you think," said the Rev. Mother, "that I left my heart behind me when I put on the habit?" On parting with the same friend she told her that next to the happiness of seeing her a Sister of Charity, was that of knowing she would be an Ursuline.

survived in the community, and many younger members who had of late years joined the daughters of St. Ursula, were now to be introduced to the welcome and deeply interested visitors.[1] In truth this

[1] Among the lately professed Ursulines was Sister Augustine (Eliza Anster), a fervent religious and a highly accomplished woman. These qualities were certainly far from singular in that edifying and gifted community, and our reason for mentioning her here is that her portrait has been sketched by a loving and masterly hand. Having been sent at an early age to the Ursuline school, she became greatly attached to the nuns, and looked forward to the happiness of entering the convent at some future day. This resolve was not approved of by her friends, and in company with her sister she was taken to France and confided to the care of an aunt, who, after some time, went with her daughter and her nieces to reside at the convent of Les Dames Anglaises in the rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor at Paris: an educational establishment of high repute in which were several English and Irish girls, and many of the daughters of the French noblesse. Among the French girls was Aurore Dupin—an *enfant terrible* by her own acknowledgment during the first year of her school life, but a more satisfactory pupil as time went on. Although inheriting a wild strain of character, with a passionate love of liberty, and manifesting much of the waywardness of genius, the little Aurore learned to love the nuns, looked on her convent home as an earthly paradise, and ended by cherishing a desire to become a religious in the house of the Dames Anglaises. Between her and Eliza Anster a strong friendship sprang up. Recalling some thirty years later those convent days, which she says were the happiest days of her whole life, Aurore described her friend's incomparable beauty:—the exquisite Greek outline of her features, her fair complexion, sweet and penetrating eyes, beautiful chestnut hair; the noble expression of her countenance, her fine figure and dignified bearing. "From her earliest years," continues Aurore, "all the strength of her vigorous nature had been turned to devotion. She came to us holy, as I have always known her, firm in her resolve to become a religious, and cherishing in her heart one exclusive and absorbing affection—the remembrance of a nun in her Irish convent, Sister Mary Borgia de Chantal (Mrs. Mac Carthy?), who had always encouraged her vocation, and whom she afterwards rejoined when she took the veil. The most precious token of friendship she ever bestowed on me was a little reliquary which I have always kept on my mantelpiece, and which had been given to her by this nun. I read even now on the reverse: *M. de Chantal to E.*, 1816. She prized this gift so much that she made me promise never to part with it, and I have kept my word. It has followed me whithersoever I went. Once, on a journey, the glass was broken and the relic was lost, but the medallion remained intact, and the reliquary itself has become the relic for me. This beautiful Eliza was the first in every class, the best pianist in the convent, the one who did everything better than anyone else, because she brought to her studies in an equal proportion great natural talent and an indomitable will. She did all this with the intention of preparing herself for educating the young Irish girls who should one day be confided to her charge in Cork; for she was as much bent on her Cork convent as I was on mine of the Dames Anglaises. She never conceived it possible that she could be a nun in any other house, and her vocation was none the less true, since she persevered in it with joy. . . . . I learned that Eliza had left the convent (Fossés-Saint-Victor), that she mixed much in the world, that she resigned herself to this life of ball going and amusement, but that she had never for a moment wavered in her resolution. She wrote to me that she accepted the trial which her family inflicted on her, but that she felt every day more and more certain of her vocation, and that perhaps she and I should one day meet in Cork as members of the same community, if the fact of my French birth should prove an insuperable bar to my entrance into the English convent at Paris."

Time sped on. Eliza reached her haven of rest. Aurore wandered into paths as divergent as could possibly be imagined. They never met again, but correspondence did not altogether cease between them. Aurore remembered her convent school-days with a tenderness that is supremely affecting; while Sister Augustine never relinquished the hope that her old friend would at length return to the sheepfold she had forsaken, and find safety and happiness in the religion she had outraged in her conduct and denied in audacious words. Shortly before her death, which happened a few years ago, Mrs. Anster received a

was a memorable day for each community, and it was agreed that the recollection of it should be made perpetual by a devout union of prayers and good works.

On the 13th of November, the Blessed Sacrament was deposited in the little oratory of the convent by the bishop. The foundation of the Cork house dates from that day, the festival of St. Stanislaus. The sisters received some very useful presents for their new establishment. Mrs. Moylan sent them from Blackrock a simple timber altar and a well-carved oak tabernacle: the first convent tabernacle brought to Ireland on the restoration of religious establishments; Mrs. Waters of the Presentation Convent gave them an oil painting of the Blessed Virgin; Father Gavan of the Order of Preachers, who was appointed their confessor, presented a picture of the Virgin and Child for an altar-piece; Mrs. Bullen sent a carpet for the oratory; Mr. Augustus MacSweeny a handsome pair of cruets for the altar; Mr. Frank Hynes and Mr. and Mrs. Martin Mahony a variety of very useful articles.

On the 19th November, the Feast of St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, the sisters commenced visiting the poor in the north parish, to whose abodes they were, for some days, conducted by the parochial clergy. Typhus fever raged in Cork at this time; the visitation became therefore extremely onerous; and the friends of the sisters were greatly concerned, seeing how difficult and dangerous was the duty which they were now called to fulfil. The officers of health often went to the abodes of the fever-stricken poor, and broke some panes of glass to give ventilation before the sisters arrived on their charitable rounds. Fever in Ireland, not only at that time but for many a year before and for many a year after, was more like a plague than anything else. The want of sufficient general sanitary regulation and of medical attendance; the horrible misery of the poor, and the indescribable wretchedness of their dwellings, rendered the obscure part of the towns a hot-bed of infection. The disease may not have been actually contagious, but under these lamentable conditions it was epidemic. There was no great difference except in terms; attendance on fever cases was highly dangerous to doctors, priests, nuns, and all generally. The delight of the people may be imagined when the Sisters of Charity first went amongst them. They regarded them with wonder and

letter from the friend of her youth, expressing the old affection, but ignoring the momentous questions on which her correspondent had sought to engage her.

Passing strange it is, this silver thread running through, and now and then for an instant linking together, these two lives. Sister Augustine of the Ursulines followed from youth to age her heaven-directed path in blissful obscurity, leaving behind her no remembrance that the great world cares to cherish. The other—GEORGE SAND—filled the nations with her name, and "for nearly half a century exercised an intellectual supremacy, such as no other woman has ever enjoyed." But her labour served no good cause, and her fame can only make the angels weep.

admiration, and gave them various names such as the "Walking Nuns," the "Black Ladies," the "Daughters of God."

In the evenings the sisters were engaged in directing tickets for soup, bread, and coals, which were given by the officers of health for the relief of convalescent patients. They were also entrusted with the distribution of a large sum which had been left by Mr. Timothy Mahony for procuring food, clothing, &c., for the destitute room-keepers of the north parish at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. This charity had hitherto been distributed by the clergy of the parish, who now kindly placed it at the disposal of the sisters: the latter of course engaging to adhere to the conditions specified by the benevolent donor. The instruction of the sick in the North Infirmary was committed to the sisters; and at the bishop's request they took charge of the religious instruction of the penitents in St. Mary Magdalen's Asylum. These engagements certainly afforded as much work as could well be accomplished by a small community at the beginning of their career.

Mrs. Aikenhead having set the house in order and organised the work, returned early in 1827 to Dublin, leaving Mrs. Teeling as rectress, and the four other nuns who had come to Cork the previous November under her jurisdiction. But a sore trial awaited the young community. Sister Mary Aloysius Clinch was seized with typhus fever and continued ill for twenty-one days before the crisis came. She was not convalescent when Sister Mary Ignatius Aikenhead caught the same disease, which caused a relapse to the first patient. The rectress, with the assistance of a nurse, attended the sick sisters, and the visitation of the poor devolved on the other two, who frequently after having been out all day, had to give up a part of their night's rest to relieve the rectress and the nurse. During this season of distress and embarrassment the sisters received proofs innumerable of the kindness and affection of friends and neighbours. Dr. Bullen and his son, Dr. Denis Bullen, were untiring in their professional attendance. The younger doctor knowing that the sisters were strangers, and had not messengers at their command, often went himself to the chemists to get the medicines he had ordered for the patients, and would call at the market and order whatever had been prescribed as regimen. These excellent men seemed to think they could never do enough for their friend Mary Aikenhead and her community. Their attendance was gratuitous, and whatever they ordered as medicine or nourishment was left at the convent door free of cost to the nuns. Mrs. Bullen and Mrs. Martin Mahony sent wine and other requisites; and Miss Teresa MacSweeny supplied the convent with sheets, as the store of linen was not sufficient for such an emergency. When the sisters were recovering these ladies sent their vehicles that the invalids might drive out and take the air; and Mrs. Mahony's garden was at

their service as soon as they could take walking exercise. These were no small acts of kindness at a time when fever was of so virulent a nature and people were so apprehensive of contagion.

The first sister who got ill recovered, although she had had a relapse; the second, Sister M. I. Aikenhead, fell into consumption, and having been recalled to Dublin, died in Stanhope-street about eighteen months later on. The community lost in her a very sweet and amiable member. Though she had lived in the world she imbibed none of its spirit. She was wonderfully innocent. About a year before this gentle Sister of Charity went to God, the congregation lost Sister Mary Stanislaus Mahony, a daughter of the founder of the Cork house, Mr. Timothy Mahony. She entered the noviceship in the 20th year of her age. Shortly after she had received the habit she fell into consumption, and died after six months, having by privilege made her vows.

The work of the Cork community rapidly increased. In addition to the institutions on their list they had now to visit the South Infirmary and another hospital. They taught catechism in the cathedral, and opened an evening class for children preparing for first communion. Adults, too, were constantly sent to them by the clergy for instruction; and as the cathedral was the church in which the soldiers of the garrison attended Mass and received the Sacraments, numbers of the brave fellows, found ignorant of the Christian doctrine, were, without more ado, sent next door to the nuns to be instructed in their religion and prepared for confession and communion. The men were quite pleased with their visits and their lessons. After a while some of their Protestant comrades came with them, and asked to be allowed to sit in the class with the Catholic men. The nuns made no objection; and the result of this little military mission was that several non-Catholics were received into the Church, many of each class were confirmed, and some were married—the ceremony taking place in the oratory of the convent.

The community was now increased by the arrival of Sister Mary de Chantal Coleman, and a lay-sister. Welcome as the auxiliaries were, their appearance in "Cork Castle" caused some little embarrassment, for the establishment was barely provided with necessaries for those who were already its inmates. Fortunately some blankets which had been purchased for the poor were not yet distributed, and these being doubled and laid on the floor supplied a bed for one; while a shake-down of some other kind was contrived for her companion. But this was a trifle. The Sisters of Charity were not too particular. They could put up with a great deal of inconvenience, even while going through an immense amount of anxious toil.

Much good was done in Cork during the Jubilee, which was preached in the city in 1827. Father Aylmer and Father Esmonde,

both of the Society of Jesus, preached to overwhelming crowds. The confessionals were thronged each day from five o'clock in the morning; and the people seemed to think of nothing but of repenting, and stirring up their faith. Father Esmonde said Mass daily at the convent and heard confessions in the oratory. From morning till night the sisters were kept busy preparing the people for the sacraments.

In the month of July, 1828, Mrs. Aikenhead paid a short visit to Cork. She found the community working at high pressure, and with more calls on their ministrations than they could possibly respond to. Nor did she find them without difficulties to contend against, and inconveniences to put up with. The deficiencies of "Cork Castle" were more seriously felt every day, and the nuns had not the spiritual advantages which would have compensated for their privations. They could not afford a chaplain, and consequently had Mass but rarely in the convent. This would not have involved much inconvenience as the cathedral was just opposite, had they been able to count on Mass at a regular hour, but it frequently happened that after waiting more than an hour in the sacred edifice it would be announced to them that there could be no Mass until 10 o'clock. This spiritual destitution lasted for nearly four years, at the end of which time the Rev. John Crowe, a young priest recently ordained, came to offer to give them daily Mass in their little oratory, until he should receive his appointment. For nearly two years he was their self-appointed chaplain, attending gratuitously with the utmost regularity.

Not only did the sisters feel seriously from time to time the difficulty of making the two ends meet in the administration of their own financial and domestic affairs, but the purse of the poor was sometimes left empty in their hands, and they were obliged to enter the abodes of misery without the means of giving even a meal to the starving. This was perhaps the hardest part of their duty, but they had been taught to perform it unflinchingly. Mrs. Aikenhead never expected that her children were to go about like Ladies Bountiful distributing freely from ample stores. They were to travel on their daily rounds, teaching and consoling the poor, and, when they had the means, relieving their temporal distress. They were to share abjection and privation where they were powerless to help. "Sisters of Charity," she once said, "are not to gain heaven without suffering with, as well as for, the poor."

But even at the worst of times they were never left without striking evidences of the Providence that watched over them. On one occasion the superior and another sister set out on their visitation with only three-halfpence in their pocket. In downright anguish of mind they went to innumerable sick and destitute people, giving them nothing but kind words and promises and prayers. At length they reached a house where a family were sheltering who had been evicted

from their little holding. The father was lying sick unto death with his starving children around him. The little ones came peeping into the nuns' baskets hoping for something. The superior gathered them round her and prayed, and told them she had come unprepared and had given away all she had, but that she would return in the morning and bring them food. She requested the poor father to have his family join in prayer that some source of relief might be opened for them and for many other sufferers in equal need. As she went out she told her companion with tears that this was the first time she felt her vow of poverty almost too heavy; but that she hoped in God. That night the poor family offered up the Rosary for the intention named, and in the morning help came in the form of a note for £10, enclosed in a letter with the superscription: "For the poor of Christ." This proved to be but the first of a series of gifts from an anonymous donor, whose benefactions amounted to a regular annual income of £100 for thirty years.

Again, in 1831, typhus fever of a very malignant kind visited the convent. Sister Mary Austin Quan was first attacked; and while she was slowly recovering, Sister Margaret Joseph Segrave, who had lately come from Dublin, was seized. Kind friends and neighbours once more came to the assistance of the sorely-tried community, and hastened, by their constant and thoughtful attentions, the convalescence of the patients. This long illness left but two of the sisters free to carry on the visitation of the sick-poor during a severe winter season.

In the spring of 1832, Mrs. Teeling was recalled to Dublin to assist in the novitiate; but her health broke down before the end of the year, and she survived only a few years. Mrs. Coleman took the superior's place in Cork, first as *locum tenens*, and afterwards as rectress; and from that date her name became indissolubly associated with the Cork community of the Sisters of Charity in all their trials and all their works of benediction.

Mrs. Aikenhead on her return from Cork early in 1827, resumed her office of novice mistress, and with the exception of short occasional absences, remained in Stanhope-street until 1831. During that interval, however, some important changes took place. The archbishop had long been very anxious for the establishment of free schools on an extensive scale in the metropolitan parish, and Mrs. Aikenhead was likewise most desirous of undertaking this work. Already it had become evident that the house in North William-street was unsuitable for a convent of Sisters of Charity. The accommodation was not good, the situation was damp and unwholesome, and the schools were so small that they scarcely afforded room for one hundred children. Moreover, the care of an orphanage interfered with the all-important duty of the sick mission. In 1827, a community of Carmelites offered

to take the place and the orphanage off Mrs. Aikenhead's hands. The proposal was gladly accepted; for it was made at an opportune moment, just as the archbishop's great wish and the Rev. Mother's was about to be realised by the erection of a convent and schools in Upper Gardiner-street.

The large sum of money required for this undertaking had been supplied in an unexpected way. The Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Everard, dying in 1821, bequeathed to his dear friend Dr. Murray a sum of £4,000 to be employed in the erection of poor-schools in his parish, but with the power of using the interest during his life if he so pleased. This sum, with the interest accruing on it, Dr. Murray was resolved to expend at once on the erection of a convent and schools for the Sisters of Charity, whose foundation the testator had from the beginning greatly aided by his advice and encouragement. Many difficulties had to be surmounted before a suitable site was obtained, and the building was not commenced until 1827.[1] Before much progress had been made the Carmelites became anxious to have possession of the premises in North William-street; and Mrs. Aikenhead took a house on Summer-hill, where she located the sisters until their new home should be ready for their reception.

About this time the archbishop received news which showed that the affairs of the congregation were not neglected in Rome. The welcome intelligence was communicated in a letter to his Grace, who sent the following extract from its pages to gladden the Rev. Mother's heart:—

"The Pope has appointed a select congress of Cardinals, four in number, with Monsgr. Caprano, to revise the Rules of the Sisters of Charity. I have now no further apprehension on that score. Many other matters of a very urgent nature, and of great moment, such as the ecclesiastical affairs of Belgium, may retard our affair for a couple of months longer, but the confirmation so long wished for may be reckoned upon as certain."

While the new buildings were being raised in Gardiner-street, the sisters destined for the schools were engaged in preparing for the task that lay before them. Sister Mary Xavier Hennessy, as might be expected, was appointed to an onerous post in the department of instruction. She was desired to visit all the female poor schools in the city and its neighbourhood, and discover if possible a well-organised system which might be adopted in the new institution. The tour of investigation was not very successful, but useful hints were obtained from other people's experience, and something like a system was developed in Sister Mary Xavier's mind, and laid past for future application. The school which seemed to come the nearest to her

1 About two years later Father Kenny began to build on an adjoining plot of ground the Church of St. Francis Xavier.

requirements was one in Meath-street containing four hundred children, and kept by a member of the Society of Friends ; and it was agreed that when the Gardiner-street schools were opened, a teacher from the staff of the good Quakeress should be engaged for six months.

At length the buildings were finished. On the feast of St. Bridget, February 1st, 1830, the archbishop blessed the new convent under the title of Our Lady of the Assumption ; Mother Catherine and her community removed thither from Summer-hill ; and the Free Schools were opened. The Meath-street system got a fair trial, but it turned out to have only two points that could be considered faultless, namely, the classification of the children, and the needle-work regulations. Some of the evolutions that were practised in the school-room were simply absurd. For instance, while the class-monitresses were teaching, four others spent the entire day walking from corner to corner of the room, crossing each other like policemen on their beat. This marching corps were supposed to maintain order and to see that the teaching staff did their duty. So monotonous and distasteful was this service to the children, that when they met in their beat they relieved themselves by laughing and talking ; and the task of keeping them in order turned out more laborious than the management of the rest of the school.

There were difficulties, too, arising from the previous circumstances of the children which would have made it hard, even under the best possible system, for the nuns to get a large school quickly into order. Owing to the want of Catholic schools some of the young people had been in the habit of frequenting sectarian institutions, to which their parents sent them with a permission to partake freely of the morning repast that was provided as an encouragement to punctual attendance ; but with a caution against the religious instruction : the former might be taken without scruple, the latter not without a grain of salt. This produced in the children's minds a feeling of contempt for their teachers, or at any rate a general idea that schoolmistresses were to be distrusted. Not being able to distinguish their friends, the little mob no sooner made their appearance in the Gardiner-street schools than they reduced their principles to practice, and encouraged one another in noisy and disrespectful conduct. In fact Mrs. Hennessy's first attempt at being a schoolmistress turned out, in spite of her laboured preparation, a total failure. The school-room became in a short time a scene of indescribable uproar and confusion, and she felt herself utterly powerless to control or to teach the children.

Great was the perplexity of the nuns. They felt there was no help except in humble patience and in the trust that aid would be sent them from above. Kind Providence came to their assistance by

bringing them into acquaintance with the Brothers of the Christian Schools who had been recently introduced into Ireland by Mr. Edmund Rice of Waterford, and who were now conducting schools in Hanover-street, on the south side of the city. The sisters from Gardiner-street being in the habit of visiting the female wards of the Jervis-street Hospital, generally met there on Sundays the Christian Brothers who attended the male wards. Mrs. Hennessy determined on accosting Mr. Rice and begging him to help the Sisters of Charity in their difficulty. She did so on two occasions, but each time he turned from her appearing to suppose she must be jesting. At last, seeing she was in sober earnest, he listened to her story of the school troubles. "Well," said he in reply, "I'll send you Brother Duggan." "Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Hennessy, "is it that little boy?" "*Little boy!*" rejoined Mr. Rice: "I wish I had fifty such *little boys*."

The next thing to be considered was when Brother Duggan could come; for the well-filled schools in Hanover-street kept every hand busy; and Saturday, the only day on which there was no school, was needed to rest the teachers and prepare them for the labours of the following week. However, the much-needed rest was kindly relinquished, and it was arranged that Saturdays should be devoted to the sisters' schools, until they should be brought into something like order. On the following Saturday, therefore, Brother Duggan appeared in the midst of a crowded room full of unruly children. He had to shout and whistle before he could command silence. At first he took on himself the entire management of the school. By degrees he discontinued inflicting punishment himself, merely pointing out the guilty parties to the sisters and leaving them to deal with the delinquents. By degrees also he forbore assuming any authority before the sisters, so as to leave the children entirely dependent on them. In the course of a few months perfect order reigned in the schools. Besides making these Saturday visits, Mr. Duggan came in the evenings to teach arithmetic to the sisters, whom he ranged round him like children and lectured on each rule until he found it was perfectly understood.

"Our school system," say the *Annals* of the congregation, "is the Bell and Lancastrian organised by the Christian Brothers, and modelled for female schools by our sisters. Our 'School Government Book' was compiled from that of the Christian Brothers by Sister Mary Xavier, to which she added the method of lecturing on reading, writing, and arithmetic, from recollection of Brother Duggan's hints on the subject. Experience proves our system good, as the children are induced to love their lessons from the attractive manner in which they are given, and religion being the basis of every part of their education, the mind is formed to piety which stands to them in after life. The system has also the advantage of a well-organised arrangement for teaching needlework; it is entirely Mrs. Lancaster's."

Mrs. Hennessy in truth only wanted to be set on the right road and to get a fair start. Once she had got a practical lesson, and learned how to conquer and govern and educate the children, there was no longer any serious difficulty in her way. For the rest of her life she was such a finished schoolmistress that one would have thought she had never been anything else.

The schools in Gardiner-street were just getting into good working order when an application was made to the Rev. Mother by Mrs. Barbara Verscoyle for a small community to superintend a poor school which she had erected at Sandymount with £500 bequeathed for that purpose by the late Earl of Fitzwilliam. Mrs. Verscoyle kindly undertook to build the convent, and to settle upon it about £1,200, the interest of which, as it was specially named for annual Masses, was to go towards the payment of the chaplain. On the 16th of August, 1831, Mrs. Aikenhead and four sisters took possession of the convent. The house was very small, and the school arrangements were incomplete. The chapel was to be open to the public, yet no provision had been made in the way of choir for the nuns, and they had to hear Mass in the parlour which opened on the sanctuary.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the getting of the house at that moment was a great blessing. Over exertion of body and mind had told on Mrs. Aikenhead's health. For some time it had been visibly declining; at length it broke down and no hope of restoration remained except in perfect rest and removal into country air. Spinal inflammation brought on by the too severe strain of late years was the disease from which she now suffered; but an affection which might have yielded to judicious treatment, became chronic owing to the unaccountable error of her physician, who misunderstood the case, and by ordering open air exercise at a time when she could hardly walk, and an unsparing use of mercury, hemlock, turpentine, and iodine, caused intense suffering, and in the end disabled her for the rest of her existence. In fact she was treated experimentally for internal cancer, a disease which she had not; and this proceeding would probably have proved fatal to life, but for the interference of the apothecary who came to the nuns and said: "Ladies, you may get anyone you like to make up these medicines, I will have nothing to do with them: Rev. Mother is being poisoned." This good man was a great admirer of Mrs. Aikenhead, who had, he said, "a heart as big as the Rotundo, and a head to match." He certainly did a good service by his vigorous protest. The doctor was changed, the real cause of her illness discovered, and a different line of treatment entered upon. The new doctor was Joseph Michael O'Ferrall, a young man who had already risen to some eminence in his profession. Nothing could exceed his skill and attention; and the Sisters of Charity have always felt that to him, under God, they were indebted for the prolongation

of the Rev. Mother's life during the twenty-seven years she survived. From that time forth, however, she was never able to follow the duties of community life; and though her system recovered in a partial degree it was not until years had been passed in confinement to her room and even to her bed. In Dr. O'Ferrall Providence sent her not only a skilful physician, but a devoted personal friend and a great ally. Through the co-operation of his energetic spirit—ardent where his cherished profession was concerned—she was enabled in the course of time to bring to a successful issue the most cherished object of her life.

Not very long after the Rev. Mother, now a confirmed invalid, was carried to Sandymount and left as it were bound hand and feet there, a sadly memorable occasion arose in which forced inaction must have been a hard trial to one who like her would gladly be the first in danger as the first in labour. The Sisters of Charity who hitherto had been working in paths hidden from the great world's ken, were now called forth to prove their virtue in the hour of trial and serve their country in a season of terrible calamity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CHOLERA IN DUBLIN AND CORK—REV. MOTHER INVALIDED—CORRESPONDENCE—CONSTITUTIONS CONFIRMED.

IN the midst of the unusally early genial Spring of 1832, Asiatic Cholera, which had desolated the East and spread over the Continent of Europe, broke out in Ireland. Dublin was the first place attacked by the plague, and on the 22nd of March cases were reported. On its approach the public authorities took measures for lessening as far as possible the sufferings which were certain to afflict a city whose sanitary condition had never been sufficiently attended to, and whose poorer quarters were crowded with a population sunk in indescribable misery. Archbishop Murray issued a pastoral exhorting the people to great temperance, since it was ascertained, as he said, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the great scourge, cholera, marks out a large proportion of its victims among the intemperate. He cautioned them against holding wakes, and exhorted all who found themselves attacked to go at once to the public hospital prepared for the occasion, assuring his flock that they should there find all that would tend towards their recovery, should such be God's will; or all the spiritual aids to a happy death which the Church can supply: together with Christian burial—a cemetery having been consecrated within the hospital grounds.

"But," concludes the archbishop, "while we neglect nothing that can tend to stop the progress of the disease, let us acknowledge with humility, that: 'Unless the Lord keep the city, he watches in vain that keepeth it.' (Ps. cxxvi. 1.) Let us then look with confidence to the Lord, and aspire above all things to his grace and friendship. Let us, I again and again entreat you, turn from those sins which would render heaven like a canopy of brass which our prayers could not penetrate; let us go before the throne of grace with hearts purified by repentance in the blood of Christ; let us invoke the blessing of Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and then let us commit ourselves without reserve to his holy keeping, saying with the apostle, 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord: or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's.' (Rom. xiv. 8.) May the blessing and the protection of the Almighty be extended over you, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor. xiii. 13.)

The sisters, continuing as usual their visits to the sick-poor, endeavoured, though often with little success, to induce those who were attacked with cholera to go to the hospital. Soon, however, they had the consolation of hearing from the archbishop that the public authorities had requested that the Sisters of Charity should visit at the Penitentiary in Grangegorman-lane, which had been converted into a temporary hospital to receive the cholera cases. Immediately a certain number of the sisters, many of them only novices, who were residing in the Stanhope-street Convent, were named for the mission; and Mother Catherine, with two of her community removed thither from Gardiner-street to join the chosen band and to dwell near the scene of their labours: the temporary hospital being within a few hundred perches of the convent. As the circumstances of this mission were peculiar, and out of the usual sphere of the duties of the Sisters of Charity, Mrs. Aikenhead thought it necessary to address to the sisters engaged in it the following letter of instructions:—

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"My very dear Sisters,

"With heartfelt satisfaction I have just received directions from our venerated archbishop to make such arrangements as would enable ours to attend constantly at Grangegorman-lane Penitentiary during the continuance of the present awful visitation. Although I confidently trust, my dear sisters, that the study of your holy 'rules for those who visit the sick,' has amply predisposed you for the efficient discharge of the duty you are now called on to fulfil, yet as this particular mission is of a somewhat different character from those you have been accustomed to, I think it my duty to call your attention to a few particulars.

"The peculiar intention of our revered prelate on this occasion, namely, that by our attendance in the hospital we should tranquillise minds suffering from the effects both of agonising disease and false terror, will be most effectually met by perfect composure both of countenance and manner while treating with the poor sufferers: and also by great simplicity in the manner of instruction. In the present case lengthened expositions or explanations of the Articles of Faith and detailed examinations of conscience should be entirely avoided. The sentiments you should be most careful to excite in the poor sufferers are implicit faith in all that our holy Mother the Church teaches, *because God Himself has revealed it;* unbounded confidence in the Divine Mercy; acts of divine love; perfect charity towards all mankind; humble compunction for sin; and unlimited resignation to the most just and holy will of God, especially with regard to the present infliction of his Providence and its ultimate result. The frequent repetition of the following little prayer in a gentle tone of voice, but repeated distinctly and solemnly, will excite in the dying the dispositions principally required:—'O my God! I accept of death as a homage and adoration which I owe thy Sovereign Majesty; as a punishment justly due to my sins; in union with the death of my dear Redeemer, and as the only means of coming to Thee, my beginning and my last end.' This with a devout invocation of the Holy Mother of God and St. Joseph is form long enough considering the circumstances of the malady. The prayers of the Church for the agonising should be recited by all at home during the time of evening visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

"One word I have to urge regarding the public recitation of prayers in the hospital (and I do so most earnestly) is, that it be made more solemnly, and *much* more slowly than is the usual custom amongst ours. Believe me, my dear sisters, this is a point of no small importance for general edification. All who have ever heard our archbishop recite English prayers, have had the opportunity of copying from a perfect model.

"I need scarcely observe the necessity of peculiar attention to exterior deportment. This should be equally removed from any degree of forwardness, and from any *undue* appearance of disinclination to hold such communications as the medical gentlemen or other officials may seem to desire. It will probably be appointed that you visit the hospital in your religious veils; if not, I request that all lay aside their crape veils before they enter the wards; let them be folded and put in the pocket. It is not according to the spirit of our institute that we should appear in any exercise of *its* functions with our faces veiled like Carmelite nuns.

"These are a few of the ideas which have struck me on the present occasion, and I communicate them to you, my dear sisters, in the pleasing conviction that they will be received with the same sentiments with which they have been penned. Earnestly entreating your prayers, I remain, my very dear sisters,

"Your affectionate mother and sister in Jesus Christ,

"Sister Mary Austen Aikenhead.

"*Convent of the Sisters of Charity,*

"*Sandymount, 28th April,* 1832."

Without delay, therefore, the visitation of the hospital began. The sisters went as soon as possible after eight o'clock in the morning. A room was appropriated to their use, where they took off their outdoor dress and put on their veils and aprons: for there had arisen no difficulty about their appearing thus in public in their religious habit. To this apartment each retired to make her mid-day examen of conscience at whatever time she could best be spared. They returned to the

convent for dinner, and after a short interval resumed their attendance in the hospital until nightfall. Then, having washed in chlorate of lime and changed their clothes, they joined the community for a while before retiring to rest. Every part of the penitentiary, which contained fourteen courts all built round, was fitted up with beds; even the long corridors had rows of beds placed along the walls, so as to leave only a narrow passage in the centre. In some of the wards were prison-beds; and these were so high that such of the sisters as were low in stature had no chance of doing anything for the patients but by getting up on the side. The effluvia from the bags of hot salt in perpetual application to the patients made the atmosphere extremely overpowering.

The sisters had much to suffer from being obliged to refuse drink to the patients, the prevalent idea being that it was injurious. They saw a poor creature, frantic with thirst, leap out of bed and run impetuously to a bucket of water, whence, before anyone could prevent him, he took a copious draught. Except when under the influence of temporary fits of insanity brought on by this refusal of the solace which nature seemed to demand, and which experience has since proved was really the fittest for them, the dying preserved consciousness to the very last, and many were the lessons of strong faith, piety, and resignation—even *cheerful* resignation—which they gave. They were consoled by the presence of the priest and the prayers and attendance of the nuns. The laborious zeal and untiring charity of the chaplain, the Rev. L. Parsley, caused his name to be ever afterwards held in benediction by the people. So rapidly did death carry off its victims that little time was left for immediate preparation. The priest stood in the middle of a ward and read the prayers for Extreme Unction for all generally, the nuns pointed out particular cases here and there, and then he proceeded to anoint each dying person separately.

The progress of the disease was so rapid, from the first cramps and the sinking of the voice to a husky murmur, on to the last convulsive throes and final silence, that a sister counted eight different occupants of one bed in the course of twenty-four hours. Among the nurses the mortality was frightful. The poor women who acted in that capacity, many of them not the most sober or reputable characters in the city, came in at night to attend the sick, and before morning it frequently happened they were all carried out among the dead. If they had not lived unto edification, there is at any rate reason to hope that they died in charity and enjoy the reward of their heroism. Every morning a fresh list of the dead was posted at the hospital gates, and usually numbered from fifty to eighty names.

Mother Catherine was in her true element all this time. She would not allow herself a moment's rest. As the hospital did not

provide certain little luxuries which she considered might contribute to the comfort of the convalescents, she set out every morning with a basket under her nun's cloak laden with supplies. She also took with her large lawn handkerchiefs to wipe off the ice-cold perspiration which exuded from the faces and limbs of the agonising. In the evening she gathered these handkerchiefs, brought them home, washed them herself, so as to have them ready for the next day; nor would she allow anyone to do this for her, or to help her; no, there was no use in offering, or entreating: Mother Catherine in this would have her way. Sister Mary Magdalen, likewise one of the Gardiner-street Community, was indefatigable in her exertions to relieve the poor cholera patients, and her devotion caused her a great deal of bodily suffering, for she was herself troubled by a very painful malady all the time that she was serving the poor patients, helping them to endure, or preparing them to meet their God. Where all in the little band were up to the high standard required for such an heroic service, it is unnecessary to single out instances; but perhaps the zeal and light-heartedness of the novices who thus early in their religious life were named for so trying and onerous a duty, made the greatest impression on those who witnessed their devotion. One only of the sisters took the contagion. She had been for some time attending at the hospital, when one morning the sad news reached her that her mother had just died of cholera. The sisters besought her not to go that day to the wards; but she, thinking that a season of public calamity was not a time for the indulgence of personal sorrow, prevailed on the superior to allow her to go to her post as usual. By-and-by she was seized with the first symptoms of the disease, and strove, but of course vainly, to contend against the enemy. She was soon laid prostrate, and a sad procession was seen approaching the convent—three of the doctors bringing home their indefatigable ally, Sister Mary Francis. She got over the attack, and in a few days was in the hospital attending the patients as usual.

During three months the pestilence raged furiously, and the Sisters of Charity held on to their mission unflinchingly. As soon as the contagion had abated Mother Catherine and her nuns returned to Gardiner-street, and the Stanhope-street sisters carried on the visitation of the hospital for some weeks longer. After a little they discontinued their daily visits and only called occasionally. One day, however, they were startled by finding a number of new cases, and in a few days the wards filled again. The first panic having passed, this visitation made little noise; it did not spread as on the earlier occasion; the raging virulence of the disease subsided, and by the end of 1832 the cholera had disappeared from Dublin.[1]

[1] On the south side of the city a cholera hospital was opened in Townsend-street, and the Sisters of Mercy, whose first convent had been established the previous year, went there

In 1833, however, the cholera returned to the city; and so many cases occurred in the neighbourhood of Sandymount and Ringsend, that Mrs. Aikenhead became anxious to have a temporary hospital opened, in which the patients could be attended by the little community. In a letter written at this time she says: "We are in the midst of cholera. In Irishtown and Ringsend it is much worse than last year. By the aid of Sister Francis Teresa's brother, the member (More O'Ferrall), we got on Sunday £20 from the Lord Lieutenant. I sent her and another to the fine house of the landlord's agent (an English rich noble), and we have obtained a store in Ringsend. He also gave £20 more; and a few other subscriptions make £50; and we, with God's blessing, open our poor hospital this evening. You may judge how busy we all are! We hope it will be thus less expensive than now paying women here and there to sit up. Certainly it will be less injurious to our sisters than going about from one dirty hovel to another. Pray for us." In August she writes again: "Here we are going on with cholera still: Sisters M. Jerome and Francis Teresa spending all their time in the poor little hospital. We hear that the great physicians say that there is no such thing as this disease existing. God help them if they should be taught to their cost."

Cholera broke out in Cork about a month later than in Dublin, and lasted a much longer time. The panic that accompanied the visitation was still more disastrous; and the Sisters of Charity were called on to take a very prominent part in succouring the plague-stricken people, and helping to allay the unreasoning terror which the presence of public calamity evoked. Then indeed the "walking nuns" proved themselves in the sight of the whole city to be truly the "daughters of God." The bishop directed the sisters to visit the dwellings of the poor sufferers throughout the different parishes, and every morning they waited on him to give in their reports, and to receive from him the tickets for relief in food, firing, bed-clothes, &c., which they were to distribute. A hospital was immediately opened, but the number of deaths from cholera was so great that the people lost all confidence in the doctors, and refused to go to the hospital; or if any did go they would not take the medicines prescribed.

In this dilemma the doctors deputed Dr. Bullen, the only Catholic among them, to go to the rectress and beg of her to send the sisters at once to the hospital and have them remain there as much as possible, since in their doing so lay the only hope of pacifying the patients. Dr. Bullen also requested that some of the sisters would go through the lanes and persuade those who were attacked by the disease to take advantage of the hospital aid. Mrs. Coleman and Mrs. Clinch were

every morning and remained till late in the evening, nursing and consoling the sick, and preparing the dying for their passage into the presence of God. Their ministrations had the happiest effect on the patients and their friends.

forthwith appointed to attend in the hospital—and better qualified sisters for the work before them it would not have been easy to find: Mrs. Coleman so full of intelligent energy and ardent charity, and Mrs. Clinch so laborious a servant of the poor, and so sweetly engaging in countenance and manner. They went to the hospital, which was near the convent, at six o'clock in the morning, and did not leave, except for breakfast and dinner, until eight o'clock in the evening. They were exempted from their ordinary spiritual duties, such as meditation, and even from assisting as Mass, unless when they could do so at a convenient hour. Their presence worked wonders, and the doctors were amazed to see the patients taking, with the docility of children, whatever was offered them by the nuns. As soon as it became known that the Sisters of Charity were at the hospital, all difficulty about going to it ceased. But so did not the popular antipathy to the doctors. It was sometimes amusing to see the medical gentlemen screening themselves behind the sisters and clinging to their cloaks while passing through the excited crowd that surrounded the hospital.

Sometimes the doctors were anxious to detain the bodies of the deceased for *post mortem* examination, and this occasioned violent disputes with the friends of the departed. One day the relatives of a young man who had just expired insisted on the remains being delivered to them at once. To this the doctors would not consent. A number of men then collected in a small yard behind the hospital, and threatened the utmost violence if the body of their friend were not delivered to them. One of the doctors called Mrs. Coleman and told her that these men should be appeased; and then opening a door into the yard he literally pushed her out and closed the door. The sight of the religious habit had the desired effect. The men became calm, though they firmly maintained their point for some time. At length they consented to disperse on Mrs. Coleman promising the brother of the deceased that the remains should be delivered to him at the expiration of an hour. But the young man was not satisfied until he had exacted a promise from the nun that she would pray for his brother's soul as long as she lived.

Short as was the occasional absence of the sisters, they sometimes found on their return to a ward that it had changed occupants in the interval. This hurrying to the grave was truly awful. A few minutes' preparation for the sacraments was all that the violence of the malady and its rapidity allowed of. In Cork, as in Dublin, the Protestant ministers, with one solitary exception, declined to attend the cholera cases. The consequence was that the deserted patients of their flock oftentimes desired the assistance of the priests, whom they saw continually administering spiritual aid to the dying Catholics. Many Protestants embraced the religion whose professors showed such

divine charity; and were sent to heaven with the words of absolution in their ear, and in company with the poor Catholics who had been early called into the vineyard and had borne the burden and heat of the day.

As it was of the utmost importance that interment should take place within a few hours after death, there arose another difficulty in persuading the friends of the deceased to suffer this unusually hasty burial. Horrible imaginations tortured the survivors, and a general idea prevailed that the dead were oftentimes buried alive. The sudden contortion in death, and the relaxation of the muscles which occasionally supervened, gave some grounds for this suspicion. One, at least, of the sisters may have been affected by the awful apprehension which prevailed on this head. Anyhow she would often remain beside a dead body for a little while after the last breath had been drawn, lest it should be removed too soon. One day she had just seen a poor man expire; and though she was quite sure that life was extinct she still lingered, praying by the bedside. Suddenly she saw the legs, which had been drawn up in collapse, move down and stretch till they passed over the foot of the bed. She was terrified for a moment; but the doctors told her the poor fellow was really dead, and that the movement was a quite natural re-loosing of the sinews or muscles after the collapse.

Some months after the breaking out of the cholera a second hospital was opened. This also the sisters were enabled to attend, as their number had been increased by the arrival of two members from Dublin. Sister Mary Austin Quan, and Sister Mary Stanislaus Byrne were appointed to attend daily at this auxiliary establishment. There were now seven in community; two remained in the chief hospital, and two in the auxiliary; one stayed in the convent, and two only remained for the extern mission: a work as dangerous and as heart-rending as the other. These sisters had to go into the dwellings of the stricken people, to persuade the sick to go to the hospital, and to do what was possible for the family that remained behind. In the lanes the inhabitants collected in groups out of doors—pictures of terror and sorrow. Wherever the sisters appeared they were surrounded by afflicted creatures, some inquiring after their friends in the hospital, others relating their various woes. Constantly the sisters had to stop to administer consolation and encouragement as best they could. Around the hospital a crowd continually collected, whose wailings—renewed with almost frantic vehemence whenever the door opened to admit a new victim, or to return the remains of the dead—were heard at a great distance.

How the sisters escaped during this terrible season from the contagion, or from death through overwork and exhaustion, no one could tell. Providence watched over them, and gave them super-

natural strength, and sent them devoted friends and zealous helpers in their overpowering work. There was an officer of health who greatly and kindly aided them in their laborious daily duties. He had been one of the wealthiest men in the city, had kept good company, and lived in good style. Reverses had come, however, and he was obliged to take the situation which now brought him into the very midst of danger. But nobly he did his part in the front ranks of the little army of the Lord. Perhaps he had never been so acceptable to God in all his life; perhaps he never would be again were he to live for fifty years. At any rate the Master called him. He fell, and died on the scene of his labours. The sisters in passing out of the wards left him there well in health; on their return after some time they found him still in the ward, but stretched on the bed of the poor, and dying. Their next duty was to set out at once and tell his daughters that he was gone!

While the Catholic clergy of the city made themselves memorable at this terrible crisis by their untiring devotion and total disregard of personal danger, there was one among them who, as he lived nearly altogether in the cholera hospital and came more than others into communication with the sisters, was regarded by them as a special friend, as well as a bright example of charity. This was the Rev. Francis Mahony, a nephew of the founder of the convent, and a son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Mahony, the dear friends and constant benefactors of the community. "Father Frank," as he was familiarly called, had returned not very long before this date from Rome, where he had received priestly ordination. He came with a high reputation for learning and ability, and brought with him a choice library collected in Italy. Appointed Lecturer on the Sacred Scriptures at the cathedral, he distinguished himself as a vigorous and impressive preacher; he was considered a light in the confessional; but he excelled in charity, and would give "the very clothes off his back," as the people said, to relieve the destitute. The cholera patients and their afflicted families had good reason to bless Father Frank, and so also had the sisters who knew how ardent was his charity and how innumerable were its recipients.[1]

[1]Father Mahony's style of oratory pleased the educated by the richness of its illustrations and the unostentatious art of its composition; and delighted the simpler folk by the earnestness and occasional passion of its delivery. The lectureship to which he was appointed on his return from Rome was an endowment of Lord Dunboyne, once bishop of the see, and was meant as a reparation for the scandal given by the donor. Only learned and gifted ecclesiastics were named for the post, the principal duty of which was the delivery of a discourse on a scriptural subject at the ten o'clock Mass on Sundays. The evening sermons at the cathedral drew great crowds when it was known that Father Frank was to preach. One evening, at an hour when callers were not expected at the convent, the Sisters of Charity heard a ring at the door, and on inquiry found that the visitor was old Mr. Mahony, who, wishing to hear his son preach and not being able to get inside the church, so great was the crowd, begged to be allowed to stand at one of the convent windows

Cholera continued to rage in Cork throughout the year 1832. During the following year it now and again seemed to pass away, and the hospital would be closed for a time, only to have its doors reopened on the reappearance of the scourge. The sisters continued their attendance, devoting more or less time to the sick laid up there according as circumstances required. It was not till 1834 that the cholera hospital was finally closed, and the fearful visitation was completely at an end.

A convalescent hospital had been established while the contagion still prevailed, and this was likewise visited by the sisters who gave religious instruction to the patients. Extreme and wide-spread destitution was the natural consequence of the prolonged and fatal visitation of cholera. Great efforts were made to relieve the distress, and

where the voice from the pulpit could reach his ear. After the cholera had disappeared, Father Frank directed his energies with more zeal than prudence to the building of a chapel of ease to the north parish. This led to a misunderstanding with the bishop and the young priest's withdrawal to London, where he associated himself in literary achievements with his talented fellow-citizen, Dr. Maginn; earned a high reputation as a scholar, journalist, and literateur; and merged the character of "Father Frank" in that of "Father Prout." The closing years of his life were passed in Paris, and his last days were comforted by the presence in his home of his widowed sister, and the constant visits of the Abbé Rogerson. His remains were brought to his native city for interment, and having rested for a night before the altar in the Church of St. Patrick—the building of which had been the beginning of his troubles—were carried to Shandon churchyard to be laid at rest in the family vault of the Mahonys, beneath the shadow of the tower. "The bells of the different churches," writes the *Nation*, "tolled as the funeral passed by, but people asked: 'What of the bells of Shandon?' As the bells of a Protestant Church there might be an objection to have them toll for the funeral of a priest. Yet, could the bells of Shandon keep silent when the relics of 'Father Prout' passed by? . . . . Moved by human hands, or under the impression of their own feelings, thanks to the good taste of the owners, or to the extraordinary impressiveness of the occasion for themselves, directly 'Father Prout's' funeral came in sight, some solemnly, some sweetly, but all sadly, the 'bells' were heard 'tolling old Shandon's mole in,' and never ceased till the last of their minstrel was laid to rest beside the tower." After his death it was thought that a second series of the "Reliques of Father Prout" would be forthcoming. But though a volume appeared with a somewhat similar title, it contained hardly anything but literary rubbish. Father Prout spent the weeks preceding his death burning all the papers in his possession. The only piece of writing he had not the heart to destroy was a three-cornered note in a lady's delicate hand, discoloured by time. He laid it on his desk, and there it was found when he was no more. The note was from his elder and highly-gifted sister, who having been the idol of the poor in Cork, entered the Presentation Convent, and died not many years after her profession; and its purport was to invite him to the religious ceremony of her profession. Here it is—the only *relic* that Father Prout himself cared to preserve:

"*North P. Convent, Dec. 28th, '32.*

"My dear Brother,

"*All things are ready, come to the Wedding.* Thursday next is fixed for the immolation of the victim. Come and assist in offering it to the Lord. It is to be sure mean, and unworthy of the notice of *man* much less of his Creator, but the sincerity and unreservedness of the oblation may perhaps move Him to regard it. Come and add your entreaties to those of his other faithful servants, and who knows but for the sake of the petitioners the Lord may accept the offering.

"Believe me your fond sister,

"Mary F. Xavier."

help was given to the poor in grants from the Board of Health, and in other forms. The want of comfortable clothing was severely felt. Subscriptions were obtained to meet this pressing need, and a charitable committee was formed for the purpose of providing clothes for the patients discharged from the cholera hospitals. Mrs. Paul MacSweeny undertook to have the clothing made and sent to the convent, where it was distributed to all who required it, whether Catholic or Protestant. The distribution was committed to Mrs. Coleman, who accomplished the fatiguing and anxious charge in so judicious a manner as to give universal satisfaction.

The committee also furnished remunerative work to the destitute convalescent women and to the poor widows of those who had fallen victims to the disease. To this branch of the good work the sisters were also requested to attend. They had consequently to inquire into the views and opportunities and capabilities of each applicant and apportion the sums necessary for the traffic undertaken by the several individuals. A large number were provided with baskets containing a variety of small wares whereby they purposed making an itinerant trade. In order to ensure that the money thus held by them in trust for the poor should be laid out to advantage the sisters went about to the shops and purchased the articles that were required. They also induced many of the poor people, thus placed in the way of earning a livelihood, to lay by a small weekly sum so as to form a reserve from which their little stock-in-trade might be renewed as occasion required. By these means several of the itinerant vendors were enabled to persevere in their industrial pursuits for longer or shorter periods. One of the poor women thus established in business kept up her little stock by those weekly instalments for thirty years. In the end she became entirely blind, and was then taken care of by the Sisters of Charity.

Although Ireland had been scourged by plagues of various sorts, and fevers had oftentimes decimated many parts of the country, the cholera left a memory of special ghastliness behind it. Such multitudes had been swept away with hardly an hour's notice that the general impression was that a considerable decrease in the population must have been the consequence of the visitation. It was not so however. While cholera raged, fever and other epidemic diseases fell below the usual standard; and the Report of the Census Commissioners states the fact that the years 1832 and 1833 do not present any great increase of the general mortality compared with other years.

During her residence in Sandymount, from 1831 to 1835, Mrs. Aikenhead was a complete invalid. It was Dr. O'Ferrall's opinion that she should remain for five or six years almost continually in a reclining position. His directions were to a great extent carried out.

However, he permitted her to rise occasionally, put on her habit, and go out in a little nondescript vehicle—available when the laundry horse was off duty—to visit the convents and other places that she was obliged to see: always provided that she went to bed on her return, and remained on her back for hours. This constant lying in the one position, united with excessive pain, was a continual martyrdom to one of her active habits and energetic mind; and though after a long period she was allowed to sit up, the acute suffering she endured in the spine, especially in the upper part near the head, obliged her to have frequent recourse to the relief of a small cushion or padding put in between the shoulders and the head to support the latter. Even in her improved condition she was rarely, if ever, free from suffering. "I cannot stand," she once wrote, "without intense pain, nor move without suffering more than anyone can know: all this from the back; and when fatigued the head becomes badly affected. Otherwise I am considerably better." The patience with which she bore the pain, the helplessness, and the inaction of her state, was the admiration of all who approached her. If she could not glorify God by works of active charity, she certainly taught many a lesson by the perfection of her patience, and the genuine cheerfulness of her resignation. For her own part she asked for nothing but to do the will of God. When she saw it was His good pleasure that she should abandon her cherished work to others, and bear sickness as her cross, she was well content. God gave her abundant grace to bear her heavy trials; and with the special aids to endurance bestowed in the season of heavy calamity, He also gave her minor helps, precious little blessings for everyday use, which saved her from some of the worst consequences of constant illness, and kept her in that condition of mind which was essential to her safe passage through a trying crisis.

These minor aids, which medical prescriptions could not supply, were her natural cheerfulness and her love of books. She inclined to take the best view of her own case, and often pronounced herself better when anyone else would have thought there were small grounds for congratulation. "I am certainly so much better as to general health," she writes to one of the sisters, "as to be able for application of mind without any injury, and also I can enjoy all that goes on; but above all I have to thank God for a temper naturally cheerful. My spirits are good, and even when unpleasant matters or difficulties occur, experience has taught me the necessity, but above all the *comfort* of following St. Ignatius's great principle 'to do all as if there were no one but ourselves to act (that is to do our very best with fervour and perseverance) and to look for the result as entirely depending on God.'" And, on another occasion she says: "I am quite fairly, and up for anything that can be done—lying down!"

No one knew better how to enjoy 'a bit of fun' than Mrs. Aikenhead She had a fine sense of humour as well as genuine good nature. She knew how to laugh innocently, and it was delightful to hear the clear, hearty ring of merriment that would follow the narration of an amusing incident or break out on the sudden suggestion of a humorous conceit. One of her hearty laughs did good to herself, and to those about her, who loved to see the mother's eyes begin to twinkle, and the sunny smile steal over the serious, handsome face: sure signs that the good story or the witty sally was taking its effect.

There were times, however, when none were near to cheer the sufferer, and she was left alone for long periods. She would not allow the precious time of the sisters, who often had more calls on their attention than they could respond to, to be taken up with attendance on her. At these times, when it was beyond all things necessary that her spirits should not fail, and that her mind should be relieved now and then from the weight of too real cares which her forced inactivity rendered the heavier, her beloved books lent their friendly aid, and afforded her that relaxation which could not otherwise have been procured. When about to be left almost alone in the convent at one period, she wrote: "Do not suppose this will be any trial to me. I can read all day, and all the long evenings of winter with the greatest ease; and very few enjoy reading as I do." Religious works, histories, biographies—all were read with pleasure and profit; and in the intervals when she allowed herself real recreation, a good work of fiction was very acceptable. Like many another invalid, she had reason to bless those writers who can relieve the pressure of present pain or care by creating a strong and wholesome interest in what is distant or ideal. Sir Walter Scott was a favourite with the Rev. Mother; and her conversation and letters now and then showed that she was quite familiar with the sayings and doings of the characters in the Waverley Novels.

But although Mrs. Aikenhead could not see with her own eyes that all was going on well in the different houses, or take an active part in the good works of the sisterhood, she was none the less the governing power and guiding spirit of all. Wherever she might be *there* was the heart of the congregation. She now began to direct and govern by the pen. Long explicit letters, covering four and sometimes six pages of the large old-fashioned paper, were written on the sick-bed. Sometimes she wrote while lying down; sometimes at great cost of pain and inconvenience she sat up and wrote on a little bed-table, such as invalids use when taking their food. In these letters written at Sandymount, which were the first of a long series continued in other places and under different circumstances, she spared herself no trouble: now giving minute directions about domestic affairs, or charitable enterprises; now entering into highly spiritual

subjects. In reading her letters, whether written at this time or subsequently, one would say that she must have had ample leisure and considerable strength to enable her to carry on such an onerous correspondence. She had, at least later on, neither the one nor the other; and the correspondence was, under these circumstances, a hard labour and a severe penance.

In spite of difficulties the letters were written in a distinct hand which once had had a graceful freedom; the punctuation was carefully attended to; and even though the lines might be somewhat irregular, the missive was still quite legible. She did not like very small writing; and when a letter in minute caligraphy was laid before her, the first impulse was to put it aside: "Seed pearl, my dear," she would say, "I cannot read it." The tone of her letters was particularly serious, as indeed befitted the subjects generally treated in them. Yet sometimes when writing to a young superior at a distance, who naturally longed to hear a little news from the mother-house and who might want to be cheered as well as advised, Mrs. Aikenhead would send a downright pleasant gossiping letter with something of her native humour in it. But whether serious as a spiritual lecture, or playful as a familiar epistle to an intimate friend, the letters were characteristic of the writer: they discovered the strong mind and the warm heart.

At this time a constant correspondence was kept up between Sandymount and Cork. Mrs. Coleman, though so young in religion, held a very responsible post, for she filled the place of rectress during Mrs. Teeling's prolonged absence in Dublin. The letters—postage being high in those days—were generally conveyed in a hamper that travelled up and down between the two convents with an exchange of provisions. Butter, eggs, fowls, and other articles of consumption, were much cheaper in Cork, while Dublin bacon was considered a treat in the south. The same opportunity was taken advantage of for conveying not only things ordered, but presents for feast days and such like substantial tokens of remembrance. Once or twice the *Inisfail*, the little steamer in which the hamper travelled, having made the coast of England her way to Dublin, the contents of the hamper were seriously jeopardised by the delay in the transit. "The basket," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "which you kindly sent did not arrive till the day before yesterday. It was fortunate you did not send anything more than eggs; and seven of these only arrived whole, and four or five yolkes in such a state as left them fit to use yesterday in a wee pudding. The letters after being well dried could be read." How much the gifts and attentions from Cork were appreciated we can judge from a letter in which the Rev. Mother says: "You see we have a real treasure of a zealous, unmeddling, kind chaplain here, who hears the great big men's confessions before and after break-

fast; so he is worth a good egg. And I promised Dr. O'Ferrall's very amiable, nice old mother that the Rev. Mother would keep her in eggs for his breakfast. She loves him as her life. No wonder. So you see why I beg and steal!"

Her letters of this date frequently mention orders for glass of the most expensive kind, to be supplied from Cork to her friends who wanted the articles either for their own table, or for presents they wished to make to others. It would appear, too, as if more than one very handsome article was destined as a present from the congregation to some great benefactor. Mrs. Aikenhead, willing no doubt to encourage trade in her native city as well as to oblige her Dublin friends, gladly undertook these commissions. She observes that nothing so good in that way is to be had in Dublin. The glass fanciers must have been affluent folk, for silver mountings and armorial engravings are not spared.

In this correspondence the Rev. Mother is faithful in sending her love to "poor old mammy nurse." The sisters in Cork took the greatest care of Mary Rorke, pensioned her in her declining years, and attended her in her last illness. Mrs. Aikenhead was most grateful to her children for this service. "Your account," she says, "of my nurse leads me to think she will not live long. Poor soul! Almighty Providence has been most merciful to her. It is a comfort to me to think of your kindness and care. Tell her with my true love that I pray for her, and hope she will offer her prayers for me and all the dear sisters." And again: "Tell my poor nurse that our Lord is leaving her a fine time to become a saint. She has also many blessings, and now at the last hour the Almighty goodness has sent her support and comfort through your hands. Much better for her that I became a Sister of Charity than if I had been married. My children are of the right sort!"

The following letter was addressed to Mrs. Coleman during the trying period when the Cork community were in the midst of the horrors of the cholera visitation:—

"✠ *Convent of the Sisters of Charity,*
"*Sandymount, 3rd June,* 1832.

"My very dear Sister and Child in Jesus Christ,

"I am not quite sure whether I shall be able to write very much at present, but I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without thanking you for your letter and still more for your love of the duties of our dear congregation, and your efforts to be faithful in the share of labour which has been allotted to you. But my dear M. Chantal, it is our good God to whom both you and I should be grateful on this subject. And we have much to thank Him for, even for these little drawbacks on our comforts and conveniences especially experienced by our dear sisters in Cork. May all and each endeavour to deserve a continuation of his best blessings and of those special graces which are necessary for the attainment of that perfection which He has called us to practise. Of little avail will be all our

exertions in behalf of our suffering fellow-creatures if each act does not flow from the interior spirit of *genuine charity:* the indispensable characteristics of *this* you will learn from that portion of St. Paul's Epistle which is read on Quinquagesima Sunday. This should often be the subject of consideration and interior examen with ours on retreat days; for if *we* cannot prove to ourselves the existence of this charity within us by the practical exercise of those *domestic virtues* which are *alone* its *infallible marks,* we must apprehend that zeal for exterior duties is not that genuine zeal which constitutes solid virtue. We may exercise much of what will obtain the applause of human understanding, but with very much of *this* we should be like the foolish virgins with empty lamps. These are subjects of serious consideration, but we must have courage. 'He is faithful by whom we are called,' and, my dear sister, how small are the deeds by which, if accompanied with purity of intention, perseverance, and fervour, the religious soul can amass treasures of merit before God.

"I hope that each of us will, by prayer and self-examination during this holy time of Pentecost, invite the Holy Spirit to visit her heart and teach her what is faulty in her soul. We have very many helps to become interior and perfect religious, and if we do not avail ourselves of them, *ourselves* are blame-worthy. Our precious rules of the summary teach us the virtues which we are required to practise, and also assist us in gaining them. Let us remember the caution which his eminent experience in spiritual life urged St. Ignatius to give his followers—'in their spiritual duties to beware of the illusions of the enemy.' One is assuredly that by frequent reading of the summary we get the letter of the rules impressed on our memory in a manner which leads certain dispositions to stop there, and to remain as unmortified in their own *will* and judgment, as if there was no 12th rule to help them to observe those of obedience; as irritable and reluctant to be laid aside or reprehended as if there was no 11th rule to encourage them to a close imitation of Him who by his Incarnation came down on earth to teach poor corrupt nature the treasure of true humility. We read the rules, it is true, but alas! with how little practical fruit. If we remembered the 13th of the summary, would superiors find so much difficulty in getting the less honourable duties of our religious servitude performed, or, if we were inflamed with the full spirit of the 19th should we not be more amiable, more useful domestics of the Household of the Faith? It is very certain that we should constantly in prayer, and in the days of recollection we are allowed, study the full spirit of the *Illuminative* portion of the summary: it is only those who do so, that will be able to observe those regarding the vows, and those statutes of domestic discipline contained in the common rules. Industrious occupation, silence, conformity to God's holy and just appointments in the trial of sickness and at the hour of death, will not be conspicuous in any others than in the interior, humble, and mortified religious. Do then, my dear sister, pray, and get all our dear sisters (to each of whom I beg my most sincerely affectionate remembrance) to pray that we may each and all aim steadily and fervently at this most desirable end.

"All your kind attentions in the way of commissions have hitherto been very useful, and are always nicely executed. I judge that you will have other notes or letters, so shall not offer any apology for want of news in this. Tell the dear sisters who have written that I hope they will not feel me to be remiss if I take time to thank each personally. I am now better, but did suffer somewhat by all the exciting occupations of my mind during the last two months. You must all help Mother Rectress, whom I have commissioned to prevail on S. J. F. Regis to obtain a supply of good fervent novices.

"Ever, my dear M. Chantal,

"Yours affectionately in Jesus Christ,

"SISTER M. A. AIKENHEAD."

The Mother rectress just mentioned who was to ask St. John Francis Regis (whose name she bore in religion) to obtain good novices, was of course Mrs. Teeling. A letter, dated some months later, announces the safe arrival of the basket with general supplies, including a share for the good folk in Stanhope-street; and notifies the departure of the said basket on its return voyage with a miscellaneous cargo, and a cake from the Mother rectress to her *locum tenens*, Sister M. Chantal. There are particular instructions in the letter about a pair of glass butter-coolers which are to have a crest engraved thereon; and a pair of water-jugs, which, as they are intended for a present, it would be well to have ornamented with the arms of the future owner. The Rev. Mother enters into particulars when giving her directions. "I remarked," she says, "that on the cruets for Dr. Murray the man engraved four very stiff clumsy-looking shamrocks, which besides were very much too large. Of course this was mighty Irish, but not in taste: therefore do not allow the same now." And then the writer thus continues the epistle:—

"Tell Sister M. Austin with my love that I was very glad I had left it to her taste to put on the letters A. M. D. G. I quite liked the finish at the top. Tell her also that the quickness with which she executed the work pleased me much. I fear it will be like the man and his mats, and that whenever there is a profession she will be likely to be called on. They are now busy in the noviceship, as we hope that on the day of the profession we shall also have a clothing. The two candidates are the two domestic sisters, Mary Kelly, and Anne M'Gowan. I suppose your dear little mother will tell you (but if she does not, keep my secret), that there is a prospect of two postulants for the first class. This is truly a consolation to me and to all. There is a difficulty about one, so pray hard—for most truly we want *hands* and *heads*. As to the latter they are so rarely met with, that we ought to be very fervent in petitioning for such subjects. You well know how necessary it is for our work, to have *head, heart, and hands*. Some persons seem to think that legs and feet are enough for us. But if we were obliged to go about like 'Paddy in the Bowl' (perhaps you never witnessed such an equipage, but I did), surely we could do much more for our neighbours than with mere walking limbs. To be sure our habitations should be all on the flat: no stairs; and then what should we do with Cork Castle!!!

"I must have done with my nonsense. I suppose you will shrewdly suspect that, now that my lower limbs are useless, I want to depreciate the merit or advantage of acquisitions of which I am deprived. Well my dear, I had once stout *understanders*, and in the day of their power they were not idle! Perhaps I shall be soon about, for now that steam carriages have arrived to so great perfection, why should we not invent a wheelbarrow which will move by steam, and convey me hither and thither? All I shall wait for is until we arrive at the perfection of movement *up and down stairs*. I said I should stop nonsense, but you see how it gets possession of me!"

Somewhat later in the year we hear again of the basket, and the mishaps of the voyage, and find that other commissions requiring care and taste in their execution are entrusted to the sisters in Cork. It is

quite evident that a friend's house is being elegantly furnished in Dublin; and Mrs. Aikenhead cannot help saying that she often wishes that a dear young friend of hers, whom she names, was to be the mistress of the mansion fitted up in such good style, and the wife of one whose admirable qualities would make his suit very acceptable to the worthy parents of the young lady:—

"But, my dear Chantal," she continues, "don't say a word, for you know we should not meddle in such affairs, and *we cannot* be fit to judge right in them. A good Christian, a super-excellent son, and an eminently talented professional man would, I think, be materials to please my old and ever dear friends. I hope the Dr. is getting on in good health. Dr. D——'s pamphlets on the cholera are said to contain more value and weight than any which have been written. I trust he will succeed in his profession, and continue to deserve God's best blessing. *We* are in duty bound to pray our very best. . . . .

"I wish that I could tell you that dear Mother Rectress is well; but on the contrary she is very very delicate. Yet I think she has a better chance for the winter than would be the case in Cork. I am very grateful to our good God, and thank you, my dear child, for giving me news of your being happy, according to grace and good sense at least, in the midst of all the little additional privations and puzzlifications which the absence of your superior must occasion. Continue in His holy name to do your little best with confidence that He will not allow the truly humble of heart, who are diffident in themselves, and only confident in His assistance, to err or do what would be injurious to the public good. Be steady in regard to those *quiet* efforts of persons to gain their own point and to do their own will: if charity sometimes require of us to deny *our own selves* in order to gratify others, or to afford them perhaps a necessary help, it should never be at the expense of a rule, or of the real genuine spirit of the institute.

You must give a most affectionate remembrance to each of our dear sisters for their letters (M. de Sales three or four short sentences, but don't mind to remark anything of that). All must wait for my returns with a little effort of patience; but you must tell *all* that I try to pray for them. I especially wish the Cork community a happy feast on S. Stanislaus's. This time six years on that day the most Holy Sacrament was deposited in your little chapel. I remember Margaret Joseph; I hope she does M. Gonzaga, and that each and all remember the novitiate. M. Stanislaus should be almost a seraph these days, praying for us all. It will be the third feast of the holy little saint that I shall have kept in bed. Perhaps it may please God that three more shall pass in the same way—or, dear Chantal, neither of us may live to see another. Pray that we may prepare *rightly* for the result. Tell M. de Sales that I rejoice on her niece's account, and hope she will persevere.

"I think the great basket is sailing to you, and taking a bit of Dublin bacon. The Cork turkey is a noble fellow and cheap: smaller will answer usually. This large turkey is quite in good time; it will keep, and be the better, until Sunday, the 13th instant, when we shall have two or three of our sisters to dine. We are to have confirmation in our chapel that day. Pray for those who prepare; they are the adults who were instructed here: seventy men, and as many women, and some of the school children.

"Ever, dear Chantal,

"Your affectionate mother in Jesus Christ,

"M. A. A.

"Love to uncle and nurse."

It is not difficult to fancy how welcome must have been the hamper that brought these pleasant letters to the Cork community. Not but that letters arrived by other conveyances than the *Inisfail*. Mrs. Aikenhead, when she knew that news from Dublin was anxiously looked for, posted her communications regardless of expense. "I am so uneasy," she says on one occasion, "about dear Sister M.'s suspense that I have determined to send this by post. Attention to the feelings of our sisters is quite an excuse to our holy mother poverty for more than eleven pence! Our poverty is *holy*, and where can holiness be if charity, the queen of virtues, does not preside?"

The instruction of adults, referred to in the above letter, was an important part of the work undertaken by the Sandymount community. The poor population, consisting in a great measure of fishermen and their families, had had few opportunities of learning or practising their religion, and were therefore ignorant and undisciplined, though far from ill-disposed. The cholera visitation had the good effect of recalling the poor souls to a sense of their obligations, and they willingly came to the convent to learn their catechism and to be prepared for the sacraments when they found that the Sisters of Charity would help them to be better Christians. Mrs. Aikenhead, referring to this branch of the work, says, in one of her letters, that the increase of missionary labour is almost overpowering; from thirty to forty women assemble at the convent every evening for instruction, and the same number of men: persons who were either very long absent from the sacraments, or had never been to confession; most of the men, also, much given to drinking. One of the community, Sister Francis Teresa O'Ferrall, a most indefatigable nurse and consoler of the poor cholera patients, got charge of the adult instruction. She was greatly respected and beloved by the poor; and every evening large numbers assembled in the school-room to receive instruction from her. Sunday evening she devoted entirely to the Irishtown sailors and fishermen, over whom she obtained great influence, and whose bad habits she helped to correct by inducing them to adopt certain ingenious devices for noting their shortcomings. Swearing was one of their greatest sins, and the poor fellows, who certainly did not fail in good will, used when going out to sea to put a certain number of pebbles into their pockets, one of which they would drop over board every time they "came out with a big oath;" and then in the evening they would count over the remaining pebbles, and thus arrive at a more or less accurate estimate of the number of their daily offences by the tongue. Their blending of theological and nautical terms was sometimes very amusing, as was also the originality of their expressions generally. One of them being asked where God the Son was in heaven? in order to ascertain whether he understood the meaning of the words he had just pronounced in reciting the

Apostles' Creed, answered in rather an offended tone: "Arrah, ain't he alongside of his Father!" Their appreciation of the Sisters of Charity was conveyed in the declaration that they were "the best girls going."

On the 25th of January, 1833, the congregation made its fifth foundation by taking charge of the Penitents' Asylum in Townsend-street. This institution owed its origin to the charitable exertions of two humble individuals engaged in domestic service, a man named Quarterman and Mrs. Bridget Burke,[1] who began their meritorious work by endeavouring to reclaim fallen women, inducing them to leave the habitations of sin, and procuring respectable lodgings for them. They organised a penny collection, and at length, after much exertion, found themselves in a position to hire a house for the stray sheep they had brought back to the fold. After a while a highly respectable lady, Mrs. Ryan, niece to the then Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Troy, kindly undertook the superintendence of the institution. Mrs. Ryan, who was remarkably clever and energetic, employed the penitents in washing and needlework; and under her management the asylum attained to a high reputation for first-class work in each department. For some time before Mrs. Ryan's death, ill health had incapacitated her from continuing her active superintendence of the institution, and the general order, as well as the financial condition of the asylum, suffered deplorably. The Sisters of Charity had no easy task before them when they undertook the charge of the institution; but Sister Francis Magdalen MacCarthy, the superintendent of the House of Refuge, Stanhope-street, and one of the real "heads" of the congregation, was appointed to reorganise the Townsend-street establishment, and the work was speedily and satisfactorily accomplished.

This year, 1833, is memorable in the Annals of the order from the circumstance of the long-desired confirmation of the constitutions having been granted. The good news was announced to Mrs. Aikenhead in the following note hastily written by the archbishop after a laborious confirmation day, and given into the charge of the Rev. Mr. Smithwick of Sandymount, a good friend of the community established in that parish:—

"Dear Rev. Mother,

"I was unavoidably prevented from paying you a visit yesterday, as it was my intention to do, in order to give you the comfort of reading the accompanying letter regarding your constitutions. Dr. Cullen had written to me on the 1st of August, holding out the hope that, within less than a month from that date, that tedious affair would be favourably settled. But hopes on that subject had been so often held out and so often disappointed,

[1] An account of Bridget Burke will be found in "Our Exemplars Rich and Poor;" a collection of Biographical Sketches published in 1861, edited by Matthew Davenport Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, and having a preface by Lord Brougham.

that I was reluctant to raise your expectations anew, until I should have something of a more solid foundation to rest them on. I think that such a foundation is now supplied, and that I may venture to offer my congratulations upon it. I shall not, however, remove all anxiety from my mind about it, until the confirmatory Brief shall be actually issued. Dr. Cullen very humbly attributes our present favourable position to the new secretary of Propaganda; I think it is very principally owing to his own [exertions.]

"I was delighted to hear of your amendment; I hope you will be able to tell me that it continues progressive. I write these hurried lines here after Confirmation, with a view to give them in charge to Mr. Smithwick.

"Yours, in haste, most truly,

"D. MURRAY.

"*Portobello, 3rd Sep.* 1833."

Happily, the archbishop had not to bear anxiety much longer on the score of the confirmation of the constitutions of the congregation. In due course the Brief was issued, and one of the dearest wishes of Dr. Murray's heart was fully realised.

END OF BOOK II.

# BOOK III.

# Book III.

## 1833—1844.

### CHAPTER I.

PLANNING AND PREPARING—JOSEPH MICHAEL O'FERRALL—SISTERS GO TO FRANCE—ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL—DANIEL O'CONNELL.

WHILE the Sisters of Charity were engaged in their different centres of work:—attending the plague-stricken in the hospitals; teaching men, women and children; reforming the erring, and training the young; Mrs. Aikenhead in her suffering solitude at Sandymount found abundant occupation for her active mind in directing the undertakings she was not allowed to take an active part in carrying out, and planning great things for the future. Every work of charity as it presented itself was indeed embraced by her with ready zeal, but the work she had most set her heart on accomplishing—the establishment of a great hospital in which the sick-poor should receive all the aid that the physician's skill could provide, and all the comfort that the ministrations of Sisters of Charity could afford — had not yet been commenced. Nearly eighteen years from the foundation of the institute passed over before there appeared even a chance of her wishes being realised. However, not very long after she had been carried out to Sandymount to lie there invalided, her desires began to take the shape of a settled hope; Providence seemed to be gradually preparing the means requisite for the starting of the enterprise; and the time approached when a commencement might be made.

The first aid towards the establishment of the hospital was in the substantial form of a sum of £3,000 given for the purchase of a suitable house by Sister M. Teresa O'Ferrall. The second God-send was the introduction to the Rev. Mother of the able physician who

was destined to aid her in the foundation and conduct of an institution which was soon to become a great school of medicine, as well as one of the noblest works of charity. Dr. O'Ferrall no sooner learned what Mrs. Aikenhead's views were than he entered into the project with all the steady earnestness of a nature in which, under a somewhat cold and unattractive exterior, were hidden a subdued enthusiasm, unconquerable force of will, and unlimited personal devotion. In truth, stricken though she was in bodily health, her heart now rejoiced, and overflowed in thanksgiving to God, who had sent her at this crisis another great friend, another great helper.

Like most Irish Catholics of their day, Dr. O'Ferrall and his parents had found life not quite easy sailing. His father, a Catholic by birth, was of humble rank. His mother was a member of a Protestant family of high position. Having lost her parents while still very young, she was brought up by an uncle and aunt who idolised her, and gave her all the advantages of a good education and intercourse with refined society. As a child she was much attached to an old Catholic servant, whom she prevailed on one day to take her to the chapel. This was a dangerous proceeding; but the nurse's great old-fashioned mantle served as a cloak for the enterprise, and hidden within its ample folds the little girl was stolen quietly out of the house and safely introduced into the chapel of the Carmelite Friars in Clarendon-street. The impressions she then received never were effaced, and as she grew up she often took stolen marches in the same direction. When she was older, and just in the bloom of early womanhood, she wandered into the same chapel one day, and a confessional in which sat an old priest, attracted her attention. She remained for a time watching the people going in and coming out, and then made up her mind to follow their example. She went in, and told the priest she would like to be a Catholic. The good father encouraged her, and bade her come to him again. She did so, and was instructed and prepared, and finally received into the Church.

This made her very happy, but the difficulty of keeping her secret soon became more than embarrassing. Her uncle and aunt were Protestants of uncompromising character in regard to anything that might savour of Popery: from them she knew that no quarter could be expected if she were found out. It was now impossible for her to attend the Church of England service, and one excuse after another was devised as Sunday followed Sunday and her absence was remarked. At length suspicion was aroused, and as it was observed that she frequently went out alone, a friend of the family undertook to follow her steps and ascertain where the attraction lay. The convert was tracked on her lonely way to the chapel of the Carmelites. On her return home that evening she was summoned into the presence of her relatives and interrogated on the subject of religion. Having

confessed the faith unhesitatingly, she was asked whether she knew the consequences of persisting in her infatuation; whether she was aware that in the event of her doing so she could no longer remain under the roof that had hitherto sheltered her? She replied that she knew the consequences, and was ready to meet her fate. That day, without pity and without provision for the future, beautiful and friendless, the young girl was sent out into the world alone.

She made her way at once to the old priest who had received her into the Church. He was not surprised to see her in this sad plight, which he had long foreseen would be the penalty of her adherence to her convictions. He went immediately in search of a lodging where she could be placed, and, having found what was suitable near the chapel, placed her under proper protection. He and his brother priests visited and supported her, and did what they could for the friendless girl, until after some time feeling that it was hardly suitable for them to have the charge of this young creature, they looked about for some way of providing for her. In those days there were no Catholic institutions that could be had recourse to in such an emergency; and there seemed no chance of procuring a home for her except by marriage. In the neighbourhood lived a young man named Farrell, well known to the priests, and highly thought of by them. He was in a humble position, being a barber by trade; but under the circumstances would it not be well for her to have a home, and the protection of a worthy Catholic husband? The young man was introduced to her by her friends; and him they proposed to her in marriage. She received the proposal humbly; said it must be the will of God—that the Blessed Virgin had done the same thing; and submitted to what her only friends on earth considered was for her good. The marriage was solemnized in the church of the Carmelites, about the year 1790.

Young Farrell turned out a good husband. In due course a son was born who received the name of Joseph Michael; then came another son, and then a daughter; and finally the father died, leaving his widow to bring up the children as best she could. Mrs. Farrell saw her aunt no more after the night of her banishment; and it was not until she was a widow that she again met her uncle. It happened accidentally. Turning suddenly from a bye-way into Grafton-street, she almost ran against a gentleman who was crossing in a different direction. She looked up and recognised her uncle. He stretched out his hand, and, looking at her widow's garb, said they had both known sorrow since they last met. His wife too was in the grave. Some return of kindness followed this meeting.

One way or another the poor mother struggled on, and contrived to give her children a good education. Joseph was sent to Samuel Whyte's excellent school in Johnson's-court, off Grafton-street, where

the Duke of Wellington and his brother, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Thomas Moore, Robert Emmet, and other distinguished men had received their early education. Among his school-fellows was a lad named Whelan who subsequently joined the Carmelites in Clarendon-street, was appointed Bishop of Bombay, and finally returning to Ireland, ended his days in his native country, and was buried in the Church of the friary in which his early religious life had been passed.

When Joseph Farrell was old enough to work for his own livelihood, and help his mother, he took a situation in the Blackpits distillery. The salary which he received as a clerk cannot have been very large, and yet he contrived to support himself, to help in procuring education for his brother and sister, and to save money wherewith to pay the apprentice-fee, in those days considerable, when the time should come for commencing the study of the medical profession in which it was his ambition to be enrolled. Meanwhile he studied hard while entertaining his cherished dream. He thought no labour excessive, no privation beyond endurance, no efforts of patience too great, that helped him towards the attainment of his desires. His great aim was to raise the family fortunes, and place the mother whom he idolised in a position equal to that which she had renounced when she left all to follow the call of grace. He was twenty-five years of age when he commenced the study of medicine. Talent and industry marked him out for success. He became resident pupil in the Richmond Hospital, passed the College of Surgeons in 1821, and began a career which he pursued to a good old age with unabated ardour and ever increasing success. After a while he became known in society, not only as a rising young man, but also as a man of education and taste, and a perfect French scholar. His conversation and his manner were at that time not without a certain attraction: for he took some pains to be agreeable, and he wished to get on in fashionable society as well as in the professional ranks.

Dr. O'Ferrall[1] had arrived at this point of his career, and was about forty years of age, when, as already said, he was called in to attend Mrs. Aikenhead, who at once recognised the merit of her physician. His sincere religious feeling, his kindness to the poor, his conscientiousness in small as well as in great things, his ardent love for his profession, won her esteem; and then began that firm friendship, and mutual exchange of good offices which terminated only with death.

[1] The name underwent some intermediate changes before it settled into the original and ancient "O'Ferrall." The doctor incurred no small censure for this conceit as it was called. But he was not the only possessor of an ancient Catholic name who adopted the old spelling and resumed the prefix of O or Mac which had been dropped during the penal days. O'Connell said he regretted that he had not after Emancipation returned to the former style and spelled his name O'Conal.

The physician and the purchase money having been provided, Mrs. Aikenhead began anxiously to consider how she might get some of her community trained so far as to enable them to undertake the management of the new hospital. In her letters she makes frequent mention of her hopes and intentions, and refers to a project she has on foot for sending sisters to Paris to study the manner of conducting hospitals under the system of the Hospitalières of St. Thomas of Villanova. By-and-by she is in a position to speak to her correspondent in Cork of the departure of the archbishop for Paris to leave three of the Sisters of Charity to learn hospital work in one of the great institutions in that city.

"I judge that Mother Rectress has told you of the departure of our revered Archbishop—*all* on our business. Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien accompanied him, and all go on to Paris to fix our dear Sisters at the "Hospice de la Pitié," to learn accomplishments becoming Irish Sisters of Charity. Pray much and *strongly*, you and all your little flock, to bring down blessings and graces in abundance on this matter. Dr. Murray wishes to thank the Supérieure Générale in person for the handsome manner in which she consented to grant our petition. Mother Catherine and I are personally acquainted with two of the members."

Two of the nuns preceded the party, having some business in England. The third, whom we shall designate as Sister M. C., left Dublin for London with the archbishop and Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien, in the month of April, 1833. Sister M. C. has put on record a short account of the journey to Paris and of the sojourn in France; and from that interesting sketch we take the following particulars almost word for word.

On the way to London Mrs. O'Brien became ill, and her party were obliged to remain at Leamington for a week while awaiting her convalescence. By a strange coincidence three Benedictine nuns happened just then to be at the same hotel. They had come to the neighbourhood to purchase the ground on which their monastery of Princethorpe was afterwards erected. These nuns were Madame de Chatellet, the superior; Mrs. Norris, the assistant; and Mrs. Emily MacCarthy, the sister of one of the Irish congregation—Sister Francis Magdalen. Almost every evening Sister M. C. had the pleasure of spending some time in the society of these good nuns. The Benedictines had their chaplain with them, and they assisted at his Mass in the parish chapel at an early hour every morning. About an hour later Sister M. C. went with *her* chaplain the Archbishop of Dublin, having the honour of carrying his bag. At the chapel they were always met by a poor Irishman, a baker, who out of love for Old Ireland came to serve Dr. Murray's Mass. As soon as Mrs. O'Brien was sufficiently recovered the party set out for London, travelling, as they had done from Holyhead, in Dr. Murray's carriage with post

horses. Arriving in London Sister M. C. went to Lady Stanley's house in Devonshire-place to join the two Sisters of Charity who had left Ireland some time before, and were now to proceed to Paris. Two days later the party went to Folkestone whence they crossed to Calais.

As they arrived at Calais on Saturday they remained there the following day. His Grace said Mass in the cathedral. Before going into the church he provided the whole party with a number of small coins, desiring them to give one to whomsoever should ask them for money. This proceeding greatly puzzled the sisters, but it was not long until they saw the prudence of being prepared; for Mass had hardly begun when there was shaken at them a box into which they were expected to drop a coin, while all through the holy sacrifice they were constantly disturbed in their devotions by a succession of boxes or purses into which something should be dropped for the poor, or for the church, or for the souls in purgatory, or for some other good purpose. After breakfast they walked on the ramparts as there seemed to be nothing else worth seeing. Towards noon on Monday they set out for Paris. Posting all the way, they spent four days on the journey, stopping to see places of note lying on the route, such as the Cathedral of Amiens, and the pleasure grounds and stables at Chantilly. Having happily arrived at Paris, the archbishop like a good father delighting in giving a holiday to his children, kept the sisters a fortnight at a hotel that they might drive about the city and see the churches, palaces, public gardens and other places of interest. They also went to see the good nuns who were so kindly willing to receive the Irish sisters, and with whom the archbishop eventually left his children having waited to see them dressed in the costume of the nuns of St. Thomas of Villanova before he quitted the house.

After spending a few days at the novitiate in the rue de Sèvres they went to the great Hospital of la Pitié, which was under the care of the same good nuns, to begin their apprenticeship, each sister being assigned her ward and her mistress. Two of the sisters remained at la Pitié the entire year they were in Paris. The third, Sister M. C., remained only two months there in residence. During the other ten months she resided either at the novitiate, where four hours every morning were devoted to dressing the sores of all who presented themselves; or in the Children's Hospital, which contained six hundred beds. However, she used to spend every Saturday and Sunday at la Pitié to continue her lessons there. Mrs. Aikenhead was of course kept *au courant* with the absent sisters' progress in their studies, and with whatever concerned or interested them. She thus writes to one of her correspondents :—

"The Sisters in Paris are going on quite to our satisfaction, and are very happy. They find truly affectionate mothers and sisters, whose piety and

laborious zeal are most edifying—so is their charity and attention to ours. That Congregation of St. Thomas (they are called Les Filles de St. Thomas) have forty houses throughout France—most of them attached to hospitals. In all the hospitals they are supported by the government or the magistracy of the place, and this most liberally. Poor Ireland!"

In another letter on the same subject the Rev. Mother says:—"Mary Ignatius told me when last she wrote that she had a poor Irish carpenter preparing to receive the last sacraments. She says he comforts and delights her. Alas! they often witness dreadful deaths." Indeed it is easy to imagine what strange characters found their way into the French hospitals. One of the sisters told of an old general officer whose reckless life brought on disease and poverty, and who was compelled to seek refuge in the hospital of the nuns of St. Thomas. He was dying in despair. No effort of theirs availed to induce him to turn to God for mercy. His despair was caused principally by the recollection of one sin he had committed, which many would have thought venial in comparison with other transgressions. He had been the cause of a child dying without baptism; and this he thought the good God never could forgive. The sisters were grievously troubled. The superior, a very fine woman of the noblest blood in France, was lame from sciatica; but she limped up the ward, and resting her arm on the foot of the bed, she stood looking at him with her beautiful face lighted up. "What is all this about?" she said, kindly. The poor general went over the whole sad tale again, and ended as he had previously done. "*And do you presume,*" she asked, "*to measure the greatness of your crimes against the infinite goodness of Almighty God?*" The words seemed to strike him as a new revelation and to take down his pride at once. He yielded, prepared to make his confession, and at last received the sacraments.

When they were about to return home the sisters arranged to proceed to Havre, and spend a fortnight at the general hospital in that town, before they should cross to England. This establishment, likewise under the care of the nuns of St. Thomas, contained about one thousand beds, occupied by persons suffering from almost every ailment that can afflict humanity, and ranging through every period of life from helpless infancy to doating age. Here the sisters had also the advantage of seeing the pharmacy department, which was entirely worked by the nuns, and conducted so much to the satisfaction of the central administration in Paris that when a gentleman applied for the situation he was answered that no one should have it as long as Madame Riolet would keep it.

After a short stay in London at the request of Lady Stanley, whose guests they again were, the Sisters of Charity returned home. They arrived in Dublin on the Feast of St. Aloysius, the 21st of June, 1834, and retired to their convents to await the progress of events.

In the meantime Mrs. Aikenhead and her friends had been on the look out for a suitable house for the new hospital. After much searching, and much consideration, and much praying, she decided on purchasing the fine town-house of the Earl of Meath, which was offered for sale. Sister Francis Teresa's gift sufficed for the purchase of the premises; the situation, in Stephen's-green,[1] was all that could be desired; and the congregation after a short delay became the owners of one of the noble mansions left tenantless by the Union. Formal possession was taken on the 23rd of January, 1834, the Feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, the archbishop offering up the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the drawing-room of the lordly mansion. The house seemed large enough even for the big heart of the Rev. Mother, and it was in good repair. However, as the community were to inhabit the upper rooms, and these were not sufficiently lofty for constant residence, the archbishop required that the roof should be taken off, and the necessary height given to the apartments in that story. This was a tedious piece of work, and the whole house had to be left in the hands of the builder for some months. "We have had our house, here, actually without its roof," writes Mrs. Aikenhead in August, 1834, "since the 12th of July. It is being raised, that is, so much as to make the garrets real rooms or cells. Now half the roof is on since Saturday."

As often happens when a long-cherished desire has been attained, disappointments followed the first success. Mrs. Aikenhead did not find people as sympathetic as she expected, and for a while she was left to plan and cogitate without much help from without. And yet, on the favour of the public she now had to depend; for though she

[1] Stephen's-green, it so happened, was one of the most conspicuous situations that could have been chosen for the new hospital. The square had long been a favourite residence of the *elite*. Immediately before the Union, four earls, two viscounts, three barons; several honourables and baronets; eighteen or twenty members of parliament; the Protestant Primate, and the Archbishop of Armagh; the Bishops of Ossory, and of Killala and Achonry, had their town houses in Stephen's-green. In the time of the Volunteers, the green sward, of some twenty acres, was a favourite place for reviewing the city and county corps. On the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, and on William III.'s birth-day, the volunteer army mustered there to fire salutes and parade in orange cockades. It was a favourite review ground of the yeomanry force at a later period, when horse races occasionally took place there on Sundays. The establishment of a hospital in the locality was not so startling an innovation as might be supposed. Within a few hundred yards from the Green, on the western side, there had stood in the olden time the Leper house of St. Stephen, with a chapel for the use of the patients. A pious lady named Blena Mocton founded this institution, and endowed it with certain tithes, and with three acres of meadows around the chapel. The house is mentioned as early as the year 1244. About five hundred years later Mrs. Mary Mercer built the hospital which bears her name, on the site of St. Stephen's churchyard, for patients suffering under diseases of tedious and hazardous cure. (For these and other interesting particulars of the old St. Stephen's hospital and chapel, and the modern Mercer's hospital, see one of a series of valuable antiquarian papers on the churches and hospitals of Dublin, published during the last few years in the *Freeman's Journal*.

possessed the house, she had not wherewithal to support an establishment. To her correspondent in Cork she discloses her little discouragements and disappointments :—

"Only this day I have been able to determine on a plan for the commencement of the hospital. To yourself alone I freely say that we have not, or seem not to have, anyone but the Almighty Himself to aid us in this great undertaking. Such coldness from all as would surprise you! . . . . This was commenced on Monday, and I really had not time *for you* since. Indeed, my dear child, I can truly repeat the sentence with which I finished on that day. And this want of support, this falling away of every one is a trial to me. But *all*, *all* is far from proving that the good work is not His by whose assisting aid 'we can do all things.' What I want is that you will pray."

And then, having spoken of the illness of some of the sisters, she thus continues :—

"In all this midst of disappointment and illness will you be surprised to hear that we have actually three patients in the house? I really thought it better to commence, even although we should afterwards stop while the house repairs and the painting are going on. I hope the poor people will bring a blessing on the house."

In her next letter to Mrs. Coleman she says :—

"I am angry with myself for telling you of my feeling so much embarrassment, but it will induce you to pray the more earnestly. Since I wrote, I have submitted a prospectus to our venerated archbishop, which, approved of, we shall get printed and sent a-begging. On this score we should pray. . . . . Say a Hail Mary, St. Joseph's Collect, and those of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Francis Regis for our aid in this collection. All the efforts of the 'old fellow' cannot have power if we deserve the Divine aid. So on we will go, trying to be very good. Teach those around you that it is by fidelity in our religious observances, by fervour towards God, fraternal charity among ourselves, and zeal in our exercises for the relief of the poor, that we can alone obtain what we seek. We have four patients in the house, but assuredly no great accommodation as far as appearance goes. We only took them in to bring the Divine blessing on us, but not for show; so they have every comfort, and visitors pass by the room without knowing they are in it. Give my affectionate remembrance to all; and also to poor nurse."

After another interval, affairs took a satisfactory turn, and there was some good news to announce to Cork friends :—

"Report will perhaps tell you of our having received a legacy of £5,000 left to the hospital. I learn from our venerated archbishop that there is a prospect of £1,000. It is a great deal in fact, but you know how little in comparison to our wants. However, do you, as I hope we have done, thank our Lord for his favour."

And then, having said that she wishes her correspondent would get two Masses said "for our benefactors," she continues :—

"I hope my debt to you will soon be the amount of Lord Ennismore's

rent, that is £25 less! Did I tell you last time that the Marchioness of Wellesley has subscribed £20 a year for the hospital? Our prospectus is printing. As yet of course no names of subscribers can be added, as they are few, and no list could be made until we have applied. Our venerated archbishop has allowed us to name him as our founder, as you will see, and has given us a donation of £50, and £5 a year; the O'Briens (Mr. and Mrs. John) £105; Mr. Richard Simpson £50. Mr. and Mrs. Ryan have sent £5, but desired their names not to be mentioned. Yesterday the archbishop sent me another £10 from anonymous. I tell you all this that you may praise our Lord—and assuredly it is in the spirit of our institution."

The Rev. Mother's spirits soon rose to their usual high level. Some friends gave her a few pounds to purchase linen for the new hospital, and she began to cut out and arrange the various articles that would be required. She thought herself grandly provided when she could count thirty pairs of sheets and an equal number of bolster and pillow slips as the beginning of the future wardrobe. The bolster and pillow slips she made with her own hands, as she reclined on her bed in Sandymount; while her thoughts no doubt kept time with the "stitch, stitch, stitch," and visions rose up before her of all the weary aching heads destined to feel comfort, and find repose in the splendid mansion, which she considered not one whit too grand for the reception, in the day of their sorest need, of the Lord's own poor.

About this date Dr. England, Bishop of Charleston, having revisited Europe, and spent a while in Rome, was anxious to induce some Irish nuns to go with him to America and make a foundation in his diocese. Mrs. Aikenhead was asked to undertake the foreign mission, but it was not in her power to do so. "I could have wished we were to labour in that vineyard," she writes to one of her friends, "but to send any one of our present members out of Ireland would have been false zeal. We have not enough for the arduous duty we have already undertaken." Finally the Ursuline nuns agreed to send out with the bishop four of their community—Mother Borgia MacCarthy, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Molony as superior, and a young lady, a postulant, to found a convent in Charleston. They passed through Dublin on their way, and Mrs. Aikenhead had the pleasure of seeing once more her friends of former years, the older members of the missionary party.[1] She speaks of their visit in a letter, dated the 20th of October, 1834:—

"I will commence with an account of the Ursuline missioneresses. As soon as I found that they were to be a few days in Dublin, and meant to see the convents, which our dear archbishop told me was the case, it occurred to me that we could so arrange as to have the ceremony of Miss

[1] An interesting account of the Ursuline foundation in Charleston will be found in the Very Rev. Dr. Hutch's "Life of Nano Nagle." After their mission in America had been accomplished, the Irish nuns returned to their convent home in Cork.

M——'s clothing during their visit. So I wrote off to consult the parties concerned, that is to say, his Grace and our Rectress of the Novitiate. She was then in retreat, but on the 29th, St. Michael's, she waited on the archbishop, and by his advice had one of her well-written notes to invite Mrs. Maloney and her party ready to be handed in on their arrival in Harcourt-street; and another to Bishop England. All occurred beautifully. They accepted the invitation, and were at the ceremony. (They never saw one performed, *at least I think not*, as it was, for truly our archbishop does shine on these occasions.) They dined at Stanhope-street that day. Mother Rectress of that house, and of this house (Sandymount), with Mother Catherine dined with them, in the community-room, and were served by our sisters Mary Xavier and Mary Stanislaus. After dinner the entire community joined them, and they seemed delighted, especially with Mary Ignatius's musical powers. On Sunday, after they had been at High Mass in the Metropolitan Church, they paid a visit at Gardiner-street, and then came down here, where we had dinner ready, on their way to Kingstown. I did not see much of them, and they were so fatigued that we pitied them. Our dear archbishop came down, and took share of the dinner. He was most kind to them.

"I am going on mending; but necessary care requires that I sometimes remain in bed for days. So don't think me worse when you hear this. I have been no less than sitting for my picture! Some think it a very good likeness, but it worries me."

The alterations in the new hospital were now so far advanced that Mrs. Aikenhead and three of the sisters went to reside in the mansion for the purpose of overseeing the painting and internal arrangements. Three rooms only were in a habitable state; one of these was occupied by the still invalided Rev. Mother; the second was fitted up in the humblest possible style for an oratory, where the Blessed Sacrament reposed, and where the Holy Sacrifice was offered on Sundays and holidays; the third, a spacious apartment, was a regular Noah's ark. Here were the sisters' three beds in spaces transformed into cells by means of horse-rugs suspended on rods. The rest of the room served for every other purpose, and was kitchen, scullery, larder, refectory, and community room. In it was kept everything wanted for present use, or stored for future requirements, such as house linen, furniture, and so on. As the friends of the sisters thought they must be lonesome, and *lost*, and perhaps not too well provisioned in their encampment, delicate attentions were lavished on them, and little presents sent, of a kind not commonly found in convents. Everything of course was received into the ark, and it was not unusual to see a brace of wild fowl or a pine apple hanging from the bare rods of the iron bedsteads, alongside of some artificial flowers destined for the oratory. Sister Magdalen Whelan, a domestic sister of great piety, and no mean order of intellect, one day while walking up and down the room, and surveying the curious medley, was heard to say as if thinking aloud: "What a one, think you, will this child be!"

Soon after Mrs. Aikenhead had taken up her quarters in Stephen's-

green, the Marquis of Wellesley came to Ireland as viceroy for the second time. The Marchioness, a Catholic, and of Irish descent, being a granddaughter of the great American citizen, Carroll of Carrollstown,[1] had already shown herself well disposed to encourage charitable undertakings in Dublin. Mrs. Aikenhead now hoped that the Marchioness would take the new hospital under her patronage; and in this she was not disappointed. Lady Wellesley, who was already, as we have seen, a subscriber, showed great interest in the work, took some trouble to advance its interests, and wished to obtain for it the patronage of Queen Adelaide. Royal favour was not, however, extended to the Sisters of Charity; and the prospectus, which the Marchioness had hoped would announce Her Majesty's gracious countenance of the undertaking, had to be printed without any such distinction. This document, entitled: "Prospectus of an Institution intended to be established in Stephen's-green, Dublin, by the Sisters of Charity, with the concurrence of their founder, the Most Reverend Dr. Murray, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin," ran as follows:—

"The institution now proposed to be established, was the chief object for which the Order of the Sisters of Charity was first introduced into Ireland.

"The Hospitalières and Sisters of Charity of France have for centuries continued to prove the utility of placing public hospitals under their immediate care. From the period of their foundation they have had the charge of all the hospitals under the various dynasties, which have successively held the reins of government in France, and every new administration has equally confided in their zeal and ability for promoting the public good.

"The Sisters of Charity of Ireland, commenced their efforts in 1815. The many public charities, of which they have accepted the charge, have since occupied a great portion of their time; but the experience which they have thus acquired of the characters, habits, and wants of the indigent sick of this country, has only strengthened their conviction of the necessity of completing their original design.

"They have been, in fact, for nineteen years, visiting a class of sick persons who will not go to common hospitals; and they have constantly had the painful trial of witnessing their best exertions, though aided by occasional advice from medical gentlemen, defeated by the unpropitious circumstances of their patients, the want of wholesome air, and of those comforts and accommodations which are strangers to the abodes of the poor.

"The Sisters of Charity, therefore, propose to found an establishment, to which they could remove persons of better feelings, or habits, leaving to the common hospitals those who may be labouring under infectious complaints. With this view, a large airy house has been purchased, in which

[1] "Of those who attested that great document (the Declaration of Independence) some were Irish and many the sons of Irishmen. Among these Charles Carroll of Carlton was the most distinguished. His residence is added to his name. Why it should be so in this only instance is thus accounted for. There were several of the same name in the provinces. No man signed the Declaration except at the risk of life and fortune should the republican army be broken. When writing his name he was told he might have a chance to escape among a great number of namesakes, he added at once his residence to show how unwilling he was to avail himself of the circumstance."—Doheny's "American Revolution."

the plans and comforts of the hospitals in Paris, *Notre Dame de la Pitié*, *l'Hôpital des Enfans Malades*, &c., &c., and of the great hospital of Havre de Grace, are intended to be introduced. Some of the Sisters of Charity of Ireland have been for the last year residing in the above-named hospitals, for the purpose of acquiring such additional information as shall enable them to conduct the establishment on the most useful and economical plan.

"In this way it is expected that an institution will be formed, in which every friend of humanity will feel an interest, and the benefits of which will be so much the more widely extended, as its regulations will present to individuals of every sect and every creed, equal advantages and equal attention.

"The Sisters of Charity feel certain that they incur no risk in thus fearlessly commencing an undertaking naturally attended with considerable expense. They recollect that they have already been made ministers of the charity and benevolence of individuals to a very considerable amount, and they cannot think it presumptuous to hope that in their arduous endeavours to enlarge the sphere of their usefulness, they will be cheered on by a still more liberal share of public confidence and support. They cannot for a moment doubt that while they make a great and expensive effort to meet some of the most pressing claims of human misery, by opening a door to receive the poor wounded wayfarer, there will be many good Samaritans found, anxious to convey him to their care, and to supply them with the means of pouring oil into his wounds, and accomplishing his cure."

Thus did Mrs. Aikenhead express her desires and her hopes, and commend the cause to the great heart of the people. Copies of the prospectus were circulated in every direction, and it soon became extensively known that the Sisters of Charity had purchased one of the finest houses in the city, and were about to commence a work hitherto unattempted in the country. Some marvelled that religious should attempt an enterprise so difficult, and, as it was thought, so unsuited to their state; others looked on the undertaking as imprudent; but the majority gave their hearty sympathy, and regarded with admiration the great hearted woman who had the courage to carry out thus boldly her long cherished purpose.

About the month of April, 1835, all the arrangements were completed, and the institution, under the title of St. Vincent's Hospital, was opened with twelve beds for female patients, although Mrs. Aikenhead could not at the time reckon with certainty on even £20 a year for their support. The beds were soon filled however; and, finding the number of applications increase, the Rev. Mother opened another ward, and then another, and lastly a ward for children. Thus accommodation was provided for forty patients, and with this she had to be content for the first year. Dr. O'Ferrall, who was appointed first physician to St. Vincent's Hospital, had no assistance during that period in his laborious and gratuitous attendance. The first operation in the hospital was on a poor little boy, who lay in the mother's lap while it was being performed.

During the early months of the following year preparations were made for opening a ward for men. The stables and hay loft in the

rere of the hospital were thrown down, and on the site thus obtained a building sixty feet long and twenty feet wide was erected, containing a suite of rooms in the basement, and a fine well-ventilated ward above, calculated to accommodate twenty beds. The rooms beneath gave a good extern hall, a consulting room, a bath room, and a *post-mortem* room. A convenient pharmacy was also provided, having over it a room for the ward-maid and a little office for the sister in charge. To this important addition it is that Mrs. Aikenhead alludes in the following letter:—

"The three thousand pounds of which I told you we got the first payment of interest is a sum secured by legal deed in the bank, expressly for *our* hospital. This gift of Divine Providence is certainly an animating assurance of the special aid of Him, whose miracles do not cease to support the charities of this great city, although not in such abundance as to allow us to cease in our exertions or in our prayers. We must in gratitude praise the Almighty Mover of hearts, for many and unexpected little aids, as well as for the greater supports.

"We are, as I told you, preparing for a sermon on the feast of St. Patrick, and are also preparing to open our male ward under his patronage. The new ward will be called St. Patrick's, and will hold eighteen beds. We shall then have fifty two beds; but for all this we require great aid. Do not tell it to any one, but the really overpowering difficulty is, the want of persons calculated for our arduous indoor occupations. I have great comfort in some of our dear sisters, but we want as many more whose *heads* and *hearts* are right. . . . .

"I shall certainly make every effort to see Miss H. when she comes, and assuredly it will give me pleasure to have every in and out of our institutions seen by her. The more they are looked into the better. Is not that a bold assertion? It is, however, very true. Of course we know that prejudicial persons see nothing right; but to any person really sincere, and of just conscience, we are anxious to expose all."

St. Patrick's ward was opened on the 15th of August, 1836. The number of beds was finally brought up to sixty, and this point having been reached, there was a stand-still in the matter of building for five years. In fact all the ground was occupied, and there seemed no possibility of further enlargement.

However, in the year 1841 Mrs. Aikenhead was agreeably surprised by learning that the house next to the hospital, and belonging to the Marquis of Westmeath, was for sale. Adjoining the house was a magnificent banqueting-room, the scene of many a revel in the latter days of the Irish Parliament; and this now deserted hall the Rev. Mother's fond fancy immediately furnished with rows of curtained beds, and peopled with the most afflicted creatures that the city of Dublin could produce. A sum of money which had been placed at her disposal by Sister M. Lucy Clifford, and which she had destined for another purpose, was now sunk in the purchase of the noble mansion, and the concerns were put in the hands of an able architect that plans might be made for connecting the edifice with the Earl

of Meath's house, or the hospital proper. Many difficulties arose in carrying this design into execution. The landings were at different levels; rooms should be sacrificed to make passages; the principal stack of chimneys was found to be insecure. However, the plans were drawn out and the work was commenced.

The builders had not proceeded far when about two o'clock one Sunday morning the sisters in the hospital were awakened by a terrific noise. Four distinct claps were heard, and they could think of nothing but that the entire four stories of the house next door had fallen. On looking they found that this was the case. The front house was in ruins; while the banqueting-room, and the ball-room which had been connected with it only by a vestibule, remained secure. Notice was at once given to Mr. Beardwood the builder, who lost no time in sending labourers and carts to the scene of the devastation, so that by seven o'clock the rubbish was removed, the palisade which had been thrown down was replaced, and all looked as quiet and orderly as if no disaster had occurred.

The Rev. Mother, who was at that time in Sandymount, did not hear what had happened until her other communities had been shocked by an exaggerated report that St. Vincent's was in ruins. It was feared that she would take greatly to heart the loss that the congregation had sustained, and a deputation was sent out to break the intelligence to her. She listened to the account of the fall of the four stories, and then after a moment's pause, with that set of the eye which was peculiar to her at critical junctures, she quietly said, "Thank God." The sisters were edified, supposing the expression to be one of gentle resignation. But the humorous gleam stole over the Mother's face, and then she continued, "My dears, I am greatly obliged to the Lord for taking down that house. It was really the right thing to do; but *I* should have been considered deranged if I had done it. The connection of the two houses would have always been a botched affair. Now proper plans can be made, and all done as it should be." Accordingly new plans were made, including a noble granite staircase; and though there were no funds in hand to begin with, subscriptions flowed in when the work was commenced; nor did the supplies fail until all that had been undertaken was accomplished at a cost of £8,000.

Mrs. Aikenhead speaks of the addition to the hospital premises in a letter to one of her children in a distant settlement. Having told her correspondent of the temporary sojourn at St. Vincent's of five sisters from other houses, she continues:—

"Where, you may inquire, had we room for five additional sisters? Have I, or has any one told you that the old fabric next door, No. 57, is ours? Well, then, we have had a door of communication opened opposite to the door of the

convent bath room. . . . . The upper rooms will be fine, gay, airy apartments, but alas! [are now] useless, as we should be in danger of breaking our legs, the boards are in such a state of utter decay. So our sisters occupy the bedroom floor of the storey over the drawing-room. . . . . Before any of us went to inhabit it we had our good chaplain to exorcise the premises. But he did not banish the fleas, which are in swarms, or were, for there has been washing and scouring to a great extent. You may imagine that this increase of premises will give *me* much anxiety and trouble. I wish I could engage good Father West to be our architect—but it would be better still if we could find a good purse; for with plenty of cash three-quarters of our difficulties would vanish. Pray! pray!"

It is hardly necessary to observe that the money thus providentially supplied did not drop down in a golden shower on the roof. In the sweat of their brow the Rev. Mother and her community, and a few indefatigable friends, toiled at the work of collecting funds. Charity sermons were preached and bazaars were held in aid of the hospital, and on all these occasions the work of preparation, and the sending out of notices, were in themselves arduous undertakings. The periodical press was not so perfect an advertising engine as it has since become. Innumerable individuals had to be applied to personally who now would be appealed to in bulk as the great benevolent public. Mrs. O'Brien was an invaluable helper on these occasions, as indeed might be expected. "Think," writes the Rev. Mother, "of our kind friend Mrs. O'Brien having actually directed every letter at her own house." Mrs. Aikenhead's share of the work on the same occasion may be inferred from a passage further on in the same letter:—

"I hoped to finish this yesterday that I might wish you all every happiness on the feast of our great Apostle; but from two o'clock till ten last night, I was receiving and answering notes, giving directions to the porter, sending off to the newspaper offices, &c., an account of the acquisition of the Italian singers having consented to perform before our sermon. Of course you will not perhaps have heard about such folk—nor indeed did I know anything of their being in town either, till Saturday, when I was directed to apply to them. We could not obtain the desired boon, and all directions were sent off to the papers and printers, when as I told you at two o'clock yesterday our friend O'Ferrall came to say *he* has succeeded in obtaining the favour, and all the directions had to be altered that it might be duly notified to the public, as it is considered a great advantage. Of course *we* must remember that man *must* earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and we must prepare and be willing to *labour* for the poor in our vocation. Collecting funds in this great city is actually laborious, although assuredly the people are eminently charitable."

In another place Mrs. Aikenhead mentions that 4,000 petitions have just been sent out.

Among the best friends of the Sisters of Charity in those days was Daniel O'Connell. He was greatly interested in St. Vincent's, and took trouble in devising means whereby its funds might be increased.

In July, 1840, he rendered the institution no small service by attending a meeting held at the hospital, and delivering an eloquent speech in which the noble work of the sisterhood was extolled and the support of the Irish people claimed in its behalf. It was surprising, he said, that the existence of that inimitable charity was so little known. It was an institution, he added, in which the most fastidious hostility could not trace the slightest appearance of sectarian partiality. The meeting was attended by many gentlemen of influence, and a great number of fashionable ladies. The Hon. Major Southwell occupied the chair; the Right Hon. A. R. Blake, the Chief Remembrancer, referred with great feeling to the piety and heavenly zeal of the Sisters of Charity during the awful visitation of the cholera; and a committee was appointed to consider what means should be taken to obtain a larger share of public support for the hospital.

The report of this meeting had the desired effect of drawing more general attention to the work that was going on at St. Vincent's; and Mrs. Aikenhead received on the head of it visits from many interested strangers. She thus makes mention of one of these visitors:—

"I must tell you of an encouraging visit we had from one of those shreds of eternity who seem to be left on earth to show us that the Lord is omnipotent. This was an old gentleman who spoke of having wandered over the world (he is of the medical profession), and now resides in a lodging in Kingstown: nor can I make out any clue to who or what he is; but he went away in actual ecstasy with every point of our establishment (St. Vincent's Hospital), to which he told me [the attention of] his friend, an old gentleman (evidently his own old self) had been called by reading the report of O'Connell's speech here; and he produced an extract from a newspaper—our acknowledgment of Mr. Bennett's legacy."

Mrs. Aikenhead was a sincere admirer of the Liberator—the great O'Connell—as she used to call him. In a letter dated October 25, 1843, she says:—

"Our extraordinary patriot is increasing in the admiration of all. His letters and speeches seem to have assumed a tone of dignity befitting the oratory of a patriarchal patriot. Man unaided could scarcely have run the wonderful course which we have witnessed. Quietness reigns; and we must continue to pray our best."

Early in this year, 1843, the Holy See granted faculties to the Archbishop of Dublin empowering His Grace to appoint Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead, to whom the Irish foundations of the Sisters of Charity owe their origin, Superior-General for life of the said Congregation. Thenceforth her official title was that of the Mother-General; but among her own children she continued still to be commonly designated as the Head Superior.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HEAD SUPERIOR.

FOR about ten years, or up to 1845, Mrs. Aikenhead generally resided at St. Vincent's Hospital. Under Dr. O'Ferrall's care she so far recovered as to be able after some time to go through the wards, and occasionally descend to the reception room. What she was at this period of her life in character and manner may be gathered from the accounts of those who were then in close and constant intercourse with her. One of her dear friends and true disciples has kindly jotted down for the writer of this memoir her recollections of the great mother and model of the Sisters of Charity; and though these notes begin somewhat earlier than the date we have now arrived at, they refer for the most part to the period when St. Vincent's was Mrs. Aikenhead's residence. We will not break the continuity of these graphic notes, save by interpolating occasionally a fact or a trait which serves to fill up Mother M. I——'s simply beautiful outlines. These added paragraphs are placed within brackets.

"One of my earliest recollections," says Mother M. I——, "is having been brought when a child of about five years of age to visit a relation who was a nun in one of the convents of the Sisters of Charity. Mrs. Aikenhead came to the parlour. She was an elegant looking woman, tall and slight, with dark gray eyes, almost black, and an aquiline nose. Her bearing was majestic, but there was great benignity in her countenance, and her smile was very sweet. Her manners were simple and playful, which gave her an attraction for children and gained their confidence. I at once got into chat with her; and her manner and words were never forgotten by me; for taking me up in her arms she said in a marked way: 'When Margy is fifteen years old I shall tell her a secret which it much concerns her to hear.' We were taken through the convent, and Mrs. Aikenhead turning to me said: 'Would little Margy like this cell?' 'Oh, no!' cried I, running out of it as fast as I could. Nevertheless the incident made an impression on me, and as I grew up I constantly asked myself: 'What could Mrs. Aikenhead mean by saying she had a secret to tell me?' In fact the words remained so vividly on my mind I could not forget them. At the age of fifteen I actually did receive the first impressions of holy vocation to become a Sister of Charity; which I did my utmost to treat as an illusion. My parents had a dislike to nuns, and from the time my aunt died, which was at

the early age of twenty-eight, I never had any communication with Mrs. Aikenhead or the Sisters of Charity. Yet in spite of all difficulties and opposition the call was responded to, and six years later Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead received into her congregation her 'wild Irish girl,' as she used to call me.

"As time went on I was very much with her, and had every opportunity of studying her character, testing her patience, and seeing her under the most trying circumstances. I was particularly struck by her greatness of soul and her perfect freedom of action, irrespective of worldly opinion; the ease with which she referred everything to God; and her open, genial, good-natured manner of acting with everyone who came in contact with her. Her nobility of character was shown by her universal benevolence and generosity. She never did what is called a little or a small thing; her smallest actions bore the stamp of greatness of soul. She was thought by the world to be exacting in respect to monetary affairs; stiff and unbending with regard to the dower of those she admitted as members of the Order. Nothing could be more false; and many of her children now living can bear testimony to the off-handed manner in which she dealt with them about money matters, especially if she thought their families were straitened in circumstances. But when she was aware that means existed, she was inflexible—all the more as she thought the parties were trying to do God out of His right. I may mention one case among many of her disinterestedness. A young lady of ample fortune when seeking admission told the Rev. Mother that she was allowing an annuity to a married sister with a large family, saying at the same time that she was not at all bound: that it was a free gift. Mrs. Aikenhead made no remark, but admitted the young lady; and when the time came for paying the annuity to her sister, she desired her to send the cheque, and continue to do so until she had taken her religious obligations. And when making the disposal of her property before her profession, the Rev. Mother allowed her to do what she had previously intended, which was to leave £1,000 to the two eldest daughters." [Many were her acts of generosity even at times when the congregational funds were anything but abundant, and it was extraordinary what substantial service she contrived to render to the friends of the congregation. Doctors, lawyers, all whom she employed were regarded as friends by the fact. Not a few were rescued from obscurity by her means and placed in an honourable social position.]

"Her integrity and justice made her loved and respected by all men in trade who had transactions of business with her. They would go any length to serve her. She always wished her houses to encourage the business people living about them, and she would say, 'we must benefit the poor trades-people of our neighbourhood with

our little dealings such as they are.' She would be very much pained at any of ours cutting down what she called honest charges, or trying to get things too cheap—which she used to term *huckstering*. Her maxim was, 'choose respectable houses of business, and then trust them.' Those who treated her justly she considered as her friends, and always met them in the most gracious manner.

"On engaging a man in any employment one of her first inquiries was to ascertain how many children he had and their ages. She used to say that it was one of our first duties to try and benefit the families of those who worked under us, as, if we wanted them to be faithful servants, we should make them happy and feel that they were cared for. One would really think she had nothing else to do, when a large family came thus under her notice, than to settle them in the world. She would talk of what trade she would put Joe and John and Bill to; and the girls were always certain to be sent to St. Mary's, Stanhope-street. She would often say there was no charity where there was no respect for the poor: for in them we serve Christ, as they bear the image of God." [Few things gratified her more than to procure employment for trades-people; and many a time she was seen counting with pleasure the number of workmen she was employing, as if she were to get a premium for each, when in truth she was wholly depending on Divine Providence for the means of paying them.]

"In despatching a messenger from one convent to another on business she would be sure to send a scrap of writing to the sister acting, telling her to take care the bearer was not sent back without her dinner. The impression thus made on me was a sense of the widespread family feeling of the congregation: that the belongings of one convent were as welcome and as well treated in another as if they were of the same household; and that the great heart of the head superior strove to infuse its own spirit into each and all. In fact, no matter what her hurry, or what the importance of her business, she never forgot the kind act. I have often known her, when a poor man came with a note on business, to send down word to have him brought to the fire and something given him to eat while she wrote the reply; and if she heard of a sister leaving a poor person for any considerable time in the hall, or sending an answer through a third person, she would send for the sister, who would be sure never again to be guilty of such a want of consideration." [The portress at St. Vincent's had strict injunctions never to allow anyone to leave the house discontented. If his or her request could not be complied with, at least let the matter be so explained and softened that no bitterness should remain on the mind. She could not bear that anyone should be put to inconvenience. If she heard a second ring at the hall door it would distress her. She would tell the sisters they had no right to try the patience of those who came to the house : they ought to

mortify themselves and save other people. One of them refused to take a bouquet of flowers from a poor man who came one night, after the door had been locked, with this token of his gratitude. The Rev. Mother was indignant at the wound to his generous impulse. Her heart would bleed for a thing of the kind. When she was so disabled that she could not go down stairs, large parcels which it was necessary for her to see had often to be carried to the top storey of the hospital. If the person who brought the parcel happened to be old, woe to the sister who would allow him to bear his burden to the top. "These old men," she would say, "often have disease of the heart, and other ailments which make such a journey very trying and even dangerous. Get the servants to bring the parcels up."]

"It was a habit with her on wet days (when staying in a house to which a public laundry was attached) to ring her bell, and send word to the sister over the institution to see that the cartresses changed their wet clothes and got something hot to drink; and that the man who drove the cart should be properly refreshed; and that after this had been done the poor horse should be well taken care of. This was as regularly done as the wet day came. She could not bear to see anything unkindly treated, and this extended even to the animal creation. She was as particular to inquire if the cat got milk as she would have been to ask had breakfast been served in the refectory. In fact she would be seriously displeased if she found any of the brute creation left without its regular meals.

"She had a great objection to have the children in any of the institutions punished, though of course it had to be done occasionally. Every ingenuity would be used in begging them off; and she would not hear of their being kept in disgrace when any of her own feasts were in question. I remember on one occasion when the cartress went up to her for messages she asked some question about the children. The girl said to her: 'Oh, Rev. Mother, they are to be punished to-morrow, and it will be your own feast!' She made no remark to the girl on the subject, but by the next post a long letter was despatched to the rectress of the house, making no observation on the news she had received, but ordering a hot cake and a feast for the children next day. Her orders were of course carried out, to the great delight of the children, who shouted out long life to the Rev. Mother, and drank her health in a good cup of tea.

"Mrs. Aikenhead was of a most industrious turn. She never lost a moment. Even while speaking to you she would be busy folding papers, or turning envelopes, or making little fancy boxes for the country houses as prizes for the poor. When I was applying for admission to the congregation I went to visit her at St. Vincent's Hospital, which was then only in its beginning, and was shown into

her private room, where I found the Superior-General seated, with a quantity of spoons on the table before her. They were all of Britannia-metal, and she was employed engraving a cross on them with a pin, which was intended to mark them as belonging to the congregation. I was wonderstruck at finding her at this humble work. She at once saw by my countenance that I was astonished, and handing me one of the spoons to look at, she said: 'My child, it is very little matter what we are doing for God, provided we are doing it in the best possible way we can. And what would you say if I sent you to pick straws when you come to the congregation?' These few words gave me a high idea of the value of purity of intention, in the smallest and most indifferent actions, and a feeling that I cared not what I was employed in, if it were for God. And as she paid great attention to small things herself, she likewise required the same exactness in those under her. A lay sister who had charge of the halls and parlours had erroneous ideas of recollection, and thought it necessary to keep her eyes down. Rev. Mother met her one day in the hall when as usual her eyes were on the floor. 'Biddy, I don't like people who always look down,' said she. 'Look up, child!' she added, pointing with her finger to the ceiling, from which a large cobweb was hanging. Biddy looked up in utter amazement. 'And now, my child,' continued the Rev. Mother, 'if you looked up more to the heavens, you would do your work in a more perfect way for God.' No doubt Biddy looked better after the cobwebs thenceforth." [Mrs. Aikenhead was never tired inculcating the duty of being always employed, and the necessity of doing everything well, whether great or small. In a letter she says: "We must try to keep from being of the tribe of the Mesdames *Do nothing*, or even of the Mesdames *Do little*, for we have work enough on hands everywhere, and you know that 'Idlers ought not to have place in our Houses,' which ought to be busy bee-hives. Yet you know full time is due to everything, down to the boiling of an egg."]

"She had a natural tendency to see the ridiculous, and could give a most appropriate and humorous answer after her own fashion. For instance when a sister would begin to lament the perversity of the young flock entrusted to her charge and the difficulty of making them go the right way, she would look at her a long while, and then say archly: 'Thank God, my child; in all the bad things we ever did, we didn't marry!' Or, when the post would bring some not very agreeable news from the different houses, she had a habit of musing over the letters, till I would ask: 'Mother, what's the matter now?' 'What's the matter, my child? Do you remember the old song? Well, then, I'm just like the old woman that lived in a shoe: I have so many children I don't know what to do!'

"It was my duty for some time to go to the head superior in the

morning at a fixed hour, after she had made her meditation; and on a certain morning not being summoned at the usual hour, I waited anxiously for a considerable time, and thought she must have got into an ecstasy, as my idea of her sanctity was very great. I determined to venture in, most anxious to behold some supernatural operation, and crept noiselessly by her bed, the curtains of which were drawn all round. I came to the foot of the bed and opened gently the curtain, expecting to see our dear mother raised in the air. When she pleased she had a most comical expression, and this she used to the full on the present occasion; and knowing perfectly well what I was at, she raised herself in the bed, and said, laughingly: 'Good-morrow to your night-cap!—what did you expect to see?' And on hearing my simple expectations she burst into one of her heartiest fits of laughter.

"Her kindness of heart shone forth with great brilliancy in the correction of her religious children. She had a happy knack of making one feel one had done wrong, and healing a wounded heart when the fault was not deliberate. On a certain occasion when I was serving at table and not very well up to the business, I got a large dish, with a great leg of mutton and turnips, to carry from the kitchen to the refectory. I was fairly tired out when I got to the door. I could bear the load no longer, and let the dish and its contents fall in the middle of the refectory. When I saw what I had done I thought of course it was a crime of deep magnitude. I ran off to hide, leaving the community to do the best they could with the leg of mutton. It was not long until the story was carried to Rev. Mother, who immediately sent for the delinquent. I was found in some corner breaking my heart crying. I of course went to her room. She met me with open arms, saying: 'O my poor child! what happened you? They gave you such a large dish to carry! Are you hurt?' 'No, Rev. Mother, but I have broken the dish and thrown the mutton on the floor.' 'Well, my child! what of that? If the mutton wouldn't go to them, they could go to the mutton. Come now, you must sit down and take a glass of wine, and forget all about it.' This reassured me at once, and I saw that I was not going to be turned out this time.

"If any young or inexperienced superior made a mistake with regard to an over great outlay, she met their difficulty in the most liberal manner, provided the error was not intentional. I remember on one occasion being grossly taken in by a French *marchand* in the matter of church furniture. Neither myself nor my community had much experience in this line. The gentleman feigned not to understand English, and while we were making our remarks to one another in our native tongue as to the quantities we might probably require, he was all the time noting them down as orders. When we inquired what would be the cost of the moderate order we actually gave him,

he said: 'O Madame, rien de tout. I shall send the leetle bill the next time I am coming, and you need not pay at all at present if you don't like.' We thought no more about him or the order, until two months later we received a notice from the custom-house to the effect that a large case had arrived from Monsieur M., Paris, for our convent, and the invoice to the amount of £90. The consternation we were thrown into need not be expressed. We had not one farthing to meet this account, which we had not in the least expected. The fear of seeing the case arrive made me apply to my father and ask him what was to be done. His directions were not to receive the case. In the meantime I went over to Rev. Mother, broken-hearted, to tell her what had happened to me. She had previously heard something of the affair through another of our houses which had also been taken in, and she knew at once what I came about. When I arrived in her room she gave me one of her *long looks;* and then seeing that I was shrivelled into nothing with fright, she said: 'Well peeny-weeny, what's the matter now?' 'O Mother, something dreadful has happened.' 'What is it child? come here and tell me.' So then I began to relate the story of Monsieur, and how I had got the notice from the custom-house with the invoice. 'And pray what is the amount?' she inquired. And then on hearing it she took a hearty fit of laughter at my distress and utter consternation. 'And what have you done?' was her next inquiry. 'I got directions from my father not to admit the case.' 'Your father, child! what right had you to apply to your father? families must not be annoyed, or drawn into our business; so you must never do that again.' Then in the most maternal way she said: 'Well, my child, I shall pay your debt, because it is the result of your inexperience; but not so Mrs. K.'s, or Mrs. H.'s; for they are old crabs, and ought to have known the difference.'

"Her way of teaching a lesson was often extremely simple, and yet most impressive. When at St. Vincent's Hospital as a novice, I had a great horror of the dead, and could not bring myself to go near them, still less put them in their coffin. Rev. Mother was aware of this, and I was forbidden to go near a dead person, or force my feelings. However, Good Friday came, and a person actually died in the ward, which I looked on as a most blessed thing:—to die on *such a day!* Longing to make a sacrifice in honour of *that day*, I went to Rev. Mother to ask permission to go through the last services for the dead along with the sister acting. Rev. Mother looked at me earnestly, and said: 'Do you really wish to perform this act of charity?' 'I do, Rev. Mother, and feel I can do it.' She then said: 'Well, my child, go in His name, and remember that on this sacred day the holy Mother of God received the dead body of Jesus into her arms, embalmed it, and prepared it for burial. Let the Dolorous Mother of God be your model in this act, and consider yourself honoured in being allowed to

perform a sacred duty which likens you to her.' I need not say that I felt no longer any repugnance, but rather flew to perform the act, and never afterwards had any difficulty.

"On one occasion a sister came to the Rev. Mother, lamenting over the difficulties of the office to which she was appointed, saying she had not qualifications for it, and begging to be removed. Rev. Mother listened for a while, and then said: 'Obedience, my child, implies many sacrifices especially the sacrifice of the will and judgment, and when practised in perfection it supplies our insufficiency, because we rest on the will of God, by whose authority we are entrusted with our several offices. Where is your faith, my child? When am I to find in you St. Ignatius's walking-stick, that I can pitch into the corner or take out of the corner? I am old and need such: so now go, and do your poor best, A. M. D. G.'

"One of her characteristics was that deep intense spirit of faith by which she seemed to see God present in the smallest event of life, and which she never ceased inculcating to all around her. I remember once going to consult her on a difficulty regarding a soul in danger. She looked at me intently for a while, as she was accustomed to do in serious matters, and then said: 'My child, God alone can direct you in this point. Go and make a visit before the Blessed Sacrament, and tell Him your difficulty. Whatever He directs you to do with regard to that soul is the proper thing.' This spirit of lively faith was carried out most strikingly in her perfect submission to whatever God ordained. She was never known to murmur, or betray the slightest want of conformity to the Divine Will in the trials of which she had no small share. On one occasion when a great trial befel the congregation, I happened to be with Rev. Mother, and I remember watching her closely whilst she was undergoing the painful ordeal. I could not detect the slightest word or act by which one could know what anguish she was enduring at the time. A word did not escape of censure or fault-finding towards the instrument of her suffering: but occasionally I could hear the words: 'O my God, not as I will, but as Thou willest;' or '*Fiat! fiat! fiat!*' Hers was a truly warm, generous, Irish heart, and this power of self-control struck me with awe on several occasions, when she was touched or wounded in the tenderest point.

"Reliance on Divine Providence was, as might be expected, another prominent feature in Rev. Mother's character. She used to say: 'We must do our little best to support the poor, but leave the result to God, depending on his sweet Providence.' She was not at all uneasy about her institutions, even when the funds were low, and it was almost impossible, as sometimes happened, to support them. When she knew that any of our sisters were too anxious on such matters she would say: 'Why distrust the sweet Providence of God

by wanting to have more than we actually require for present use?' She was most industrious herself in trying to make funds for the support of the poor, and helping the superiors who were badly off for the means of relieving them, and she would be sure to replenish their empty purses with the first few pounds that came in her way. I have known her to correct a sister for being what she called: 'too provident in laying by for future want,' and repeat the passage of the Gospel: 'see the lilies of the field'—continuing the verse, and strongly emphasizing the words '*and not even Solomon in his glory* was arrayed *as one of these.* I do not want provident nuns.' At the same time she took every prudent care for the support of her institutions, and required all her superiors to do the same. She used to say that for the miracle of the loaves and fishes Our Lord required his apostles to produce the five loaves and the few fishes upon which to work the miracle, and that when *they* had obeyed, He multiplied beyond human calculation."

[Mrs. Aikenhead liked the sisters to be very prompt in action, and encouraged a certain ardour, but had an objection to fusses. A young sister was in a state of excitement one day about some symptoms she discovered in a patient in the hospital. "My child," said Rev. Mother, "you would want to carry about a priest in one pocket and a doctor in the other." However, when there was legitimate cause for anxiety no one was more ready than she to help the younger members in their difficulties.] "When I was employed in the visitation of the poor I took cases rather enthusiastically. On one occasion I got a call to a poor woman, whom I found in a cellar not easy to reach on account of the darkness of the passage leading down to it. She was apparently in a dying state, lying on a straw pallet with a dead child beside her, and other children playing on the flags near the bed. The poor mother was so ill and helpless she was unable to remove the dead child; nor did there appear to be any one to look after her or the children. It was Sunday, and none of the neighbours had come to the wretched abode. I was greatly struck by the state of destitution and helplessness I found the family in; and so with my companion I tried to remove the little corpse, and make the poor sufferer more comfortable by giving her some nourishment. All this took considerable time, and caused me to be beyond my appointed hour at the convent. On my return I went at once to Rev. Mother, who was staying at that house and not at the hospital. She smiled when she noticed my distress and woe. 'Well, my heart, what has happened?' she asked. 'O Mother,' I said, 'I came across such a distressing case, that I could not leave without doing something for the sufferer;' and then I related to her what I had witnessed. She looked earnestly at me, and said: 'My child, what would you wish to do for them?' 'O Mother, if the poor woman could be taken into St. Vincent's Hospital

to save her life for her little family!' 'By all means, my child,' she said; 'go back and take a cab, and bring her yourself to St. Vincent's. Tell Mother Rectress it is the Sunday of the Good Samaritan, and that I send her this poor creature in commemoration of the parable of the day.' I did not lose much time in flying back to my poor woman and doing as I was desired. She was received into St. Vincent's Hospital, and restored to her family. But the kind and genial manner in which the act was done was long remembered by me with gratitude.

"In my young days I was much struck with the spirit of family, or union, encouraged and propagated in all our houses, especially in the convent where the Rev. Mother resided. All the members of the congregation felt themselves at home wherever she was; for each she had a hearty welcome, and as she used to say, putting out her hand, *Cead mille failthe!* All felt her truly the large-hearted mother, no matter what business they came on. I remember feeling this—our dear Rev. Mother's hospitality—a great addition to my work as minis-tress; for I was constantly running about looking for beds for all those she would offer them to; and as, of course, my own was the easiest got, I was constantly shifting from one shake-down to another. Some busy-body was kind enough to tell Rev. Mother this. So she sent for me one morning, and said: 'Pray, where did you sleep last night?' 'On such a sofa, Rev. Mother,' I replied. 'Why child, I hear you seldom sleep in your cell.' 'Well, that's true, Rev. Mother, for you are constantly offering beds to visitors when there are none to be had.' She looked archly at me, and replied: 'Do *you* remember when you came to the convent *you* left Miss Margaret S. behind you at the gate, and that it is Mary Aikenhead you have the charge of (in your own person)? Now, I would have you know, little woman, that I will not be thrown about from sofa to sofa every night; so that in future you'll remember that you are not to disturb Mary Aikenhead out of her room without express permission, and that by no means are you to treat her to the worst of everything going.'

"Her life was very suffering, but most uncomplaining. She never alluded to the torture she was enduring, except when some one of those immediately about her would say: 'Mother, are you in pain?' Then she would answer: 'Oh yes, child, in the greatest; but the good doctor will mend us up, and God will get another turn out of us.' One morning, being ill, she was asked: 'How are you to-day, Mother?' In her own cheerful style she replied: 'Ah, how could I be, my dear child, but like a crock that you may have seen in the country tied up with cords, and kept together by careful handling. Only for the charity and attentive care of our dear sisters I should long since have come asunder. So now, that's what your old mother is—a cracked vessel.' When she was unable to attend daily Mass from ill-health, I once asked her did she feel it a great privation. 'Oh yes, child, the

greatest; but I'll tell you how I sanctify it, and occupy my thoughts during Holy Mass. First, I reflect how unworthy I am of being present at the great sacrifice of Calvary; therefore it is right He should call on me to make the greatest sacrifice I can offer Him. Then I solace myself by going in spirit to each of our convents, and uniting at each altar with the great Victim who offers Himself to his Eternal Father for us poor sinners. And I think with humility of the condescension of the great God, in making use of *me*, so weak an instrument, to procure his Divine Majesty so much glory. Oh, pray, child; I ought to be a saint!"

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## CHAPTER III.

### FRIENDS, ACQUAINTANCES, AND POETS.

ST. VINCENT'S must indeed have very nearly come up to Mrs. Aikenhead's ideal of a busy bee-hive. It was a scene of ever-varying life and movement. The doctors and their pupils going their rounds; the sisters attending to the spiritual and temporal concerns of the patients; men of business asking to see the Mother-General; distinguished strangers "doing" St. Vincent's as one of the sights of the town; men of science inquiring how an hospital under the care of religious can work; friends coming with offers of assistance in one shape or another; and sisters arriving on various errands from the asylum or the refuge, the schools or the novitiate. As already observed, the drawing-rooms and the best bed-rooms were given up to the poor sick, while the Rev. Mother and her community inhabited the upper storey. When she was not able to leave her room, friends and visitors had of necessity to face the long ascent. Possibly strangers were not a little surprised when they reached the attic to find themselves in a spacious lightsome airy region. In the vestibule, which was floored with black and white tiles, stood a bookcase filled with choice volumes of English and French literature, fine old editions of religious works, and several productions of Irish genius and research; while a statue of the Blessed Virgin, with pots of fuchsias or myrtles before it, occupied a prominent position at one side. A door from this vestibule opened into the Rev. Mother's sitting-room, which, with the adjoining sleeping apartment, formed the boundary of her steps for days and weeks and even months together. There she suffered countless pains, and there she planned great things, and thence she ruled her numerous family and dependents. Whatever happened within or without, and bad news did travel up the stairs from time to time, she had one great joy as she retired to rest each night:—she knew that under the same roof

with herself were God's afflicted creatures, and that of the sixty or eighty sick and hurt who were settled for the night in Lord Meath's drawing-rooms there was not one who would not be the better in soul or body for the sojourn in St. Vincent's.

So many persons of every class and condition, and on every possible business, now came to visit Mrs. Aikenhead that the receiving of them was sometimes a wearisome part of the day's duty. "I really think," she writes, "the new staircase must be very much easier than the old—so many folk make their way up to me; and little visits, although seemingly all on business, are a sad drawback to me—moreover a wearisome task by the time of dinner." And the worst of it was, from this point of view, that the people who once made her acquaintance were generally anxious to see her again. All recognised in her a remarkable woman, and to most she was decidedly attractive. Indeed her conversation was at all times agreeable and elevating. Her early reading, and her experience in practical life, stood her now in good stead. Not alone had she lost nothing of what she gathered in youth, but she had greatly added to her intellectual store in every way. "Her mind was well stored with useful knowledge," says one who knew her well, "not only in spiritual matters in which she excelled, having profited to the fullest extent by the valuable opportunities afforded her in early life of intercourse with many distinguished ecclesiastics, but also in secular learning, being well-versed in the literature of the day; so that it was a treat to converse with her. Her judgment was clear, and when after a few moments' pause she gave an opinion it was seldom found to be erroneous. All her views were noble and generous, yet prudent, and when occasion required it vigilant and wary."

One of the first things that was sure to impress a stranger was her honesty of mind and straightforwardness of expression. She worshipped truth, and greatly admired "beautiful simplicity;" and in candidates for admission to her congregation sincerity of mind was one of the first qualifications she required. "A deep sense of truth, without quibbles," she once wrote, "we should be careful to ascertain in every candidate of both classes. Try that all of ours should discriminate between artful and real simplicity. And, observe, that *years* will not give experience in any class." Again, when some one had written a highly-coloured description of a scene or an event, Mrs. Aikenhead thus expresses herself *à propos* of the subject:—

"Poor M. N. wrote a flourish to her sister. I wish we could teach folk the importance of simplicity. Truth suffers always from any deviation from beautiful simplicity. That letter was in *fact* untrue. Embellishments are said to be natural to people from the south. Now, don't say that I ought not to see faults in my own country—don't tell Margaret—but, my dear, true patriotism wishes the real perfection and blessings for that country it loves. Bragging, and boasting, and egotism ought not to be allowed to grow

in our gardens. Neither ought any one to be prejudiced or resentful of injuries. This poor sister owns that she is inclined to see no good in certain folk because they hate the Irish. It is not for the sin, but in as much as *ego* is concerned. May we learn to love the naked truth, and only hate sin, and pray for those we have reason to complain of!"

Sisters of Charity are forbidden by their rule to meddle in, or hotly discuss, politics, but they are not forbidden to entertain the sentiment of patriotism. Mrs. Aikenhead's love of country like all her affections was warm, steady, rational, and just. The Green Island which God had made so beautiful, and which the crimes of men had made a scene of desolation was the object of her enthusiastic admiration. She pitied the land as she commiserated the individual sufferers. The sorrows of the people were known to her in the pages of history, and in the hard trials of their daily existence. She grieved over them, and gave the services of a devoted life to their relief, enlisted others in the same service, and rejoiced to think that the work she had inaugurated would for generation after generation, and long after her bones had mouldered into dust, continue its beneficent course—blessing and blessed. She would excuse every failing in the poor people whose wrongs and sorrows she was so well aware of. She used to tell the sisters to make allowance for the shortcomings of those whose hardships were so great, and who were only just emerging from trials fatally calculated to bring down the standard of certain secondary virtues, even while those of a higher order might be preserved. There are lesser virtues not easily kept alive among an oppressed people, and the evils and degradation of slavery are inseparable from that state. But whatever way it might be, she taught her children to deal tenderly with the feelings and even the sins of the poor; to pity while they used every effort to amend them; to heal and comfort the bruised and bleeding hearts that did the wrong. Yet for all that she would not allow her sympathies to be so concentrated in one object or one class as to weaken their charitable action in regard to another. Alive to every one's trouble and ready to pour the wine and oil into every wound, she was always the Good Samaritan. Just and generous, she was ready to forgive and forget the injuries inflicted, and to soften the rancour of national animosity.

Protestants she made welcome to her hospital as well as Catholics, and she did not refuse them the attendance of their own ministers, who were at liberty to visit the members of their flock, provided they confined their spiritual instruction to individuals, and did not preach to the ward. The second physician whom she appointed was Dr. Bellingham, a Protestant himself, and a member of a family at that time decidedly anti-Catholic. These facts, which in our day would hardly attract notice, were remarkable enough in her time when party animosity ran high; when the Protestants, who were in

possession of most of the influential and honourable positions, were fighting every inch of the ground with the Catholics; and when a Royal Society incorporated for the encouragement of Arts, Agriculture, and Industry in Ireland, had the effrontery to blackbean the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin when Dr. Murray was proposed for election as a member of the body.

The characteristics we have just noticed sufficiently account for a certain charm which even strangers felt in Mrs. Aikenhead's society. Her conversation was of necessity full of good sense, earnestness, cordiality, and variety. At one moment it had the breadth and power of a strong masculine understanding; at another it was full of humour and quaint expressions; always it was to the purpose, and had the best effect on those she had intercourse with :—instinctively they came out in their best aspect when in her presence.

It often happened that Mrs. Aikenhead had to receive her visitors at an early hour in the morning; and when this was the case, breakfast would be served in her sitting-room for the friend who perhaps could get only at that time a few moments out of a busy day to talk over important matters. Sometimes it was a good priest who had come to say Mass in the hospital chapel, and then wanted a word with the Rev. Mother: perhaps an ecclesiastic of high standing who had grave questions to discuss; or perhaps the chaplain of one of her institutions, a young priest fresh from college, who sought her help in some difficulty, or the strong word of counsel which she knew so well how to offer and to make acceptable. Dr. O'Ferrall himself often came thus in the morning to give her an account of the hospital affairs and talk over the cases: for in these from first to last she took the deepest interest.

The afternoon visitors were of a varied character. Among them at one time was Dr. Pusey, who appears to have found a conversation with Mrs. Aikenhead more than commonly agreeable. One of his visits lasted for two hours. The Rev. Mother was intensely interested in the Oxford movement and well informed of its progress; and was quite able to meet Dr. Pusey on his own ground. He expressed a wish to witness the ceremony of a religious profession, and Mrs. Aikenhead, who though she often invited Protestants to be present when a young lady received the habit, did not care to have such strangers present at the more solemn ceremony, willingly made an exception in his favour, and invited him to a profession in Stanhope-street, on which occasion his respectful demeanour and recollected manner much struck those who observed him.

Dr., afterwards Cardinal Wiseman, who came to Dublin in 1839 to preach in the Church of St. Andrew on the day that sacred edifice was consecrated, had a long interview with Mrs. Aikenhead. The conversation was animated, and the interlocutors, it was

understood, thoroughly appreciated one another. Dr. Wiseman was then full of life and vigour. He astonished some of the sisters on this and subsequent occasions by the interest he took in details, and the knowledge he displayed in matters which might have been supposed outside the range of his studies or his observation. He was much attached to his cousin, Mrs. MacCarthy, who was at that time rectress of St. Vincent's, and there was a striking likeness between them.

Always welcome visitors to Mrs. Aikenhead were the Brothers of the Christian Schools. She had the highest opinion of the devoted brotherhood, and was grateful to them for the help they had kindly given in organising different schools of the Sisters of Charity, and for other acts by which they had befriended the congregation. It pleased her greatly whenever she heard that the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Charity lent a hand to each other in their good works. Mr. Leonard and Mr. Rice used to visit her when they came to town, and often rejoiced her heart by letting her see how highly they thought of the sisters in Cork, and how willing the brethren were to assist that community in any difficulties which they might have to contend with. As the good fortune as well as the good works of others gratified her extremely, she was always delighted to hear that the brotherhood were enabled by the gifts of the benevolent to carry on their undertakings and extend their sphere. In a letter written in 1835 to the rectress in Cork, Mrs. Aikenhead says: "Your news of good Dr. John Barry's Will in favour of the worthy and pious Brothers of the Christian Schools raised my heart to love our good God, and to praise His holy name. My faith, my hope, my charity, have been increased, and I assure you that this circumstance, added to that of Mr. Rice having also been left a sum of seven or eight thousand pounds, has been a source of very great consolation to me."

A future Christian Brother, Gerald Griffin, made his appearance from time to time, coming to St. Vincent's to visit his sister who was a novice in the congregation, and to pay his respects to Mrs. Aikenhead. The first time he saw the Rev. Mother his sister was all anxiety to know what he thought of the woman whom she loved and revered so much. But wayward Gerald was not in a communicative mood, and all he would say was, "She'll do!" However, Sister M. Baptist, if she could not coax her brother into a panegyric, had the consolation on another occasion of hearing Mrs. Aikenhead's superiority acknowledged by Mr. Rice, who was then novice master of the Christian Brothers, and who went with Gerald to visit at St. Vincent's. "She is such a woman," said Mr. Rice, "as God raises up once perchance in a hundred years, when there is a great work to be done." Gerald did not dissent, and his sister had to be satisfied with this negative approval, and give up the hope of a burst of eloquence from the

author of "The Collegians." This dear sister, being of a timid nature and very humble in her own conceit, persuaded herself that she was indebted to Mrs. Aikenhead's regard for her brother for the happiness of being received into the congregation and kept in it. Gerald Griffin's opinion of the congregation was already made known to the world in his poem of "The Sister of Charity."

One of the poet's friends, having heard that he had joined the Christian Brothers, was under the apprehension that he would find it a great trial to be in constant intercourse with persons who, it was supposed, from not being of high rank or classically educated were in a great measure uneducated and unrefined. Sister M. Baptist mentioned this one day to Gerald who was then a novice of the brotherhood. He declared he did not find it so at all. "It is wonderful," he said, "how religion refines people." The priesthood would not have satisfied his desire for self-abnegation. "A priest in the world," he once remarked to his sister, "has as much of his own will as any layman." He wanted to immolate his will as well as to sacrifice every energy of his body and mind to God. He found what he sought in the Brotherhood of the Christian Schools—a life of humble, useful labour, a life hidden in God. Mrs. Aikenhead did not see much of Gerald after he entered the noviceship, but she took a deep interest in all that concerned him, and his works had a place in her book-case.

One day there came another poet to St. Vincent's; not indeed to pay his respects to Mrs. Aikenhead, but to seek rest and healing in her hospital with the poor and the ungifted. A pale, ghost-like creature, with snow-white hair tossed over his lordly forehead and falling lankly on either side of a face handsome in outline, bloodless, and wrinkled though not with age, James Clarence Mangan was carried up to St. Patrick's ward and laid in a nice fresh bed. His weird blue eyes, distraught with the opium eater's dreams, closed beneath their heavy lids, and his head fell back in sleep just as it is pictured fallen back in death by Frederick William Burton's magic pencil.[1] The change from poor Mangan's wretched garret to the comforts of the hospital ward was fully appreciated by the sufferer, who, however, did not pour forth his gratitude in a tide of song: "Oh, the luxury of clean sheets!" he exclaimed. Nor, indeed, did the sisters recognise in their patient the charm of one who had drunk of Hippocrene. All they could discover of the poetic organisation in the strange, sad man, was the acutely sensitive and painfully restless temperament supposed to be a characteristic of genius. The author of the "German and Irish Anthologies" was in truth a rather troublesome patient. One

[1] In the National Gallery, Dublin, may be seen a drawing in crayons of the poet's head, taken after death by his gifted countryman.

of the sisters, willing to excuse his peculiarities, simply remarked: "those poets have nerves at every pore."

However, the poet of the Sisters of Charity was not Moore, though his heart was touched and his bright eyes were moistened as he went through St. Vincent's wards; nor Gerald Griffin, though he did sing well of their sacrifice and their labour; nor Clarence Mangan, albeit tended by their careful hands, and nourished by their bounty. Their laureate was Richard Dalton Williams, whose truly religious mind was deeply affected by the example of the sisters of the hospital, whom he watched in their daily round of pious and laborious duties; whose poetic insight recognised the beauty and the nobleness of their mission; whose genius found its inspiration in the motive that spiritualised their every act; and whose best productions include a song in their praise, a poem inspired by an incident he witnessed in the wards, and hymns that he wrote or translated for their use. When the Sisters of Charity first became acquainted with their future laureate he was a medical student attending St. Vincent's Hospital, and a pupil of Dr. Bellingham. He was noticeable only for his diligent attention, and his gentle, unobtrusive manner. Mrs. Aikenhead was at that time about to print a small book of hymns for her schools, and a manual of prayers for the use of the congregation. Her trusted child and friend, Sister M. C., received some charge connected with this undertaking, and found herself much at a loss in the matter of certain little poems which she thought needed revision by a competent hand. Some one told her that she need not look beyond the hospital for the assistance she needed; for there was a poet among the students. Hearing this she repaired with the grateful intelligence to the Rev. Mother, who in her decisive, off-hand manner said to her: "Well, my heart, go and find him out."

Further inquiry led to the identification of the poet in the person of Richard Dalton Williams, a shy young man who spoke but little, and rarely lifted his eyes or even his spectacles in the presence of the Sisters of Charity; but who had written some fiery war-songs and was known as "Shamrock" of the *Nation*. Acting on her warrant, Sister M. C. watches her opportunity; the poet-student is informed that one of the nuns wants to speak to him, and he is shown into the operation-room. Sister M. C. tells him she hears he is a poet; and he, blushing, owns the soft impeachment. She asks him would he have the kindness to look over a little poem, and see whether it might be sent to press? He answers that he will indeed do so with pleasure, and that he would be glad to write something for the Sisters of Charity, if anything special suggested itself. The little poem received the necessary amendment, and Sister M. C. encouraged by the poet's amiability tells him in another interview that the Sisters of Charity are about to bring out a "Manual of Prayers" for their own

use, and would like to have in it a new version of the *Stabat Mater*. Would Mr. Williams also do this for them? "Oh, impossible!" cries the poet: "Clarence Mangan tried it the other day, and utterly failed." "Never mind Clarence Mangan," urged the sister. "And, besides," added the poet, "one should be very holy to do *that;* a man should get himself into a particular frame of mind for that sort of work." "Exactly so; but is not that just what we want you to do?" suggested Sister M. C.

Mr. Williams overcame his objections and difficulties; the *Stabat Mater*, the *Dies Iræ*, the *Adoro Te Devote* were translated and inserted in the "Manual;" and an original poem, "Teach me, O God," was written for the sisters, and first appeared in their little hymn book. About the same time he wrote his beautiful poem, "The Dying Girl," the inspiration of which he found in St. Vincent's, whither they had brought "an Ormond peasant daughter, with blue eyes and golden hair," who, pining in the city for the pure and balmy air of her native vale, faded slowly, and could not, for all their tender care, be saved from death :—

"When I saw her first reclining,
Her lips were moved in pray'r,
And the setting sun was shining
On her loosened golden hair.
When our kindly glances met her,
Deadly brilliant was her eye,
And she said that she was better,
While we knew that she must die."

She speaks of Munster valleys, and of the innocent joys of country life, the pattern, dance, and fair. They listen with quiet care to her breathing, and her eyes glisten with wonder as to what all that may mean :—

"We said that we were trying,
By the gushing of her blood,
And the time she took in sighing,
To know if she were good."

She smiles and gaily talks; old tunes linger in her memory; she beats time with her wasted fingers, and bows her golden head:—

"At length the harp is broken,
And the spirit in its strings,
As the last decree is spoken,
To its source exulting springs.
Descending swiftly from the skies,
Her guardian angel came,
He struck God's lightning from her eyes
And bore Him back the flame."

While pursuing his medical studies the poet kept up his connexion

with the *Nation*, whose ardent politics and literary merit were highly attractive to "Shamrock." His contributions were not confined to songs of love and war; he composed a series of humorous poems entitled "Misadventures of a Medical Student," which described among other things the flights of the young gentleman with an imaginary Miss Jessy through the constellations. It was not to be expected that Sisters of Charity would admire lucubrations of this sort; but Sister M. C., talking one day to Mrs. Aikenhead about the poet-student, wound up her remarks by observing that she must be very much mistaken, indeed, if there was not a great deal of good in that young man. "Get at it then, my dear!" said the Rev. Mother in her downright practical way.

There were many talks, after that, on the lobbies and in the corridors, between Mr. Williams and his gentle mentor. From poetry and politics they advanced to spiritual subjects. One day he came to tell her that he had thought over what she said to him, and had made up his mind to begin a new life by making a retreat. "And where are you going to make your retreat?" asked Sister M. C. "To Mount Melleray," replied the poet. "You shall do no such thing," said she. "We don't want to make a monk of you, but a good Christian gentleman of the world: go to Clongowes."

It is recorded of Dalton Williams that "he reverenced the Sisters of Charity more than he loved the Muses;" that he was "even more ready to visit the sick and dying than to join the not unfrequent simposia of his literary and political friends,"[1] and that he was known to leave for covering on the bed of a poor sick woman, whom he was called on to visit, the inner and outer coats he had brought with him, and to return home on a winter night in his shirt sleeves.[2] His reverence for his friends at St. Vincent's is expressed in a pencilled memorandum, wherein, among the graces he received from God, and which he thought would probably have made anyone else a saint, he counted *the constant sight of the Sisters of Charity*.[3] However, he has left a more enduring memorial of his friends and exemplars, in his beautiful poem, "The Sister of Charity," which appeared in the *Nation*, August 22, 1846. Much praise has been bestowed on it; and yet it is doubtful if any words of appreciation touched the author as much as Mrs. Aikenhead's would have done had he heard them. A collection of poems, including Mr. Williams's "Sister of Charity," made its appearance, having, as it happened, a lilac cover. The Rev. Mother sends this book to one of her convents, and in an accompanying letter says: "Do not be disedified by the lilac book. I

[1] Preface to the collected "Poems of R. D. Williams."
[2] The *Nation*, December 23, 1876. (Supplement.)
[3] The *Irish Monthly*, vol. v., p. 393.

never meant *that* (Mr. Williams's "Sister of Charity") to be printed. However, it was done without consent asked or given. You must say to each dear sister that it is a very true picture of what we ought to be; and let each read it to rouse her to mend everything which can oppose our being perfect when she sees what is expected from us. No one not being really a proficient in virtue could or can ever exhibit such an exterior as would come up to this picture."

Although the poem is well known, we must give it—its place is fitly here :—

"Sister of Charity! gentle and dutiful,
Loving as seraphim, tender and mild,
In humbleness strong, and in purity beautiful,
In spirit heroic, in manners a child;
Ever thy love, like an angel, reposes
With hovering wings o'er the sufferer here,
Till the arrows of death are half hidden in roses,
And hope, speaking prophecy, smiles on the bier.
When life like a vapour is slowly retiring,
As clouds in the dawning to heaven uprolled,
Thy prayer, like a herald, precedes him expiring,
And the cross on thy bosom his last looks behold.
And, oh! as the Spouse to thy words of love listens,
What hundredfold blessings descend on thee then!
Thus the flower-absorbed dew in the bright iris glistens,
And returns to the lilies more richly again.

Sister of Charity! child of the Holiest!
Oh! for thy loving soul, ardent as pure!
Mother of orphans, and friend of the lowliest!
Stay of the wretched, the guilty, the poor!
The embrace of the Godhead so plainly enfolds thee,
Sanctity's halo so shrines thee around,
Daring the eye that unshrinking beholds thee,
Nor droops in thy presence abashed to the ground.
Dim is the fire of the sunniest blushes
Burning the breast of the maidenly rose,
To the exquisite bloom that thy pale beauty flushes
When the incense ascends and the sanctuary glows,
And the music, that seems heaven's language, is pealing—
Adoration has bowed him in silence and sighs,
And man, intermingled with angels, is feeling
The passionless rapture that comes from the skies.
Oh! that this heart, whose unspeakable treasure
Of love hath been wasted so vainly on clay,
Like thine, unallured by the phantom of pleasure,
Could rend every earthly affection away!

And yet, in thy presence, the billows, subsiding,
Obey the strong effort of reason and will;
And my soul, in her pristine tranquillity gliding,
Is calm as when God bade the ocean be still!
Thy soothing, how gentle! thy pity, how tender!
Choir-music thy voice is, thy step angel-grace,
And thy union with Deity shrines in a splendour
Subdued, but unearthly, thy spiritual face.

When the frail chains are broken a captive that bound thee
Afar from thy home in the prison of clay,
Bride of the Lamb! and Earth's shadows around thee
Disperse in the blaze of eternity's day;
Still mindful, as now, of the sufferer's story,
Arresting the thunders of wrath e'er they roll,
Intervene, as a cloud, between us and his glory,
And shield from his lightnings the shuddering soul;
And mild, as the moonbeams in autumn descending,
That lightning, extinguished by mercy, shall fall,
While He hears, with the wail of a penitent blending,
Thy prayer, holy daughter of Vincent de Paul!

Mr. Williams having become one of the registered proprietors of the *Irish Tribune* newspaper, was speedily implicated in the troubles of 1848. One day word was brought to the Sisters of Charity that the *Tribune* had been suppressed, and that the poet was in Newgate awaiting his trial for treason-felony. Sister M. C. wrote to him, trying to cheer him, and suggesting some literary work to soothe his troubled mind; but he can do nothing, he tells her, in the midst of such a dreadful din. On the 2nd of November, he was brought up for trial, on the accusation of having compassed, imagined, or intended to depose and levy war against the Queen by the publication of certain articles in the *Tribune*. One of his counsel, a brother poet, Mr. Samuel Ferguson, found it necessary to defend the traverser from the charges of socialism and infidelity. This he did in an eloquent speech, in the course of which he referred to his client's connection with "one of the best and most useful charitable institutions existing in the city;" and the employment of his pen "in embodying the purest aspirations of religion in sublime and beautiful poetry." He read in court "The Sister of Charity."

The jury, though packed with great care, returned a verdict of not guilty, and the traverser was released. By this time whatever resources he once may have had were gone, and he was reduced almost to a state of starvation. His good friends the Sisters of Charity found means to assist him, kept up his spirits, and strongly recommended him to emigrate. He made up his mind to do so, and eventually sailed for the United States. Old friends at home were not forgotten. Letters, full of humorous touches, arrived at St. Vincent's giving an account of his various experiences and adventures in the Western World. After many wanderings he married and settled in New Orleans, practising his profession, not neglecting literature, and cherishing a noble ambition which he was not spared long enough to achieve. What this was, may be inferred from the following passage[1] of a letter which breaks off suddenly at

[1] Given in the last of a series of papers, entitled, "Relics of Richard Dalton Williams," in the *Irish Monthly*, vol. v., p. 398.

these words, and was never sent to the person to whom it was addressed:

"In a book recently published at London they have ranked me with the Catholic poets. I have no higher ambition than to deserve the title, for which as yet I have, alas! done little or nothing. But if heaven spare and bless me, and the duties of my state in life permit it, I hope to do something to consecrate the harp to the same holy purpose as those of 'the Victors who stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.' (*Apoc.* xv.)"

While the civil war was raging and the armies of the Federalists were overrunning the Southern States, Mr. Williams was seized with a hæmorrhage of the lungs, and died after a few days' illness at Thibodeaux, Louisiana, in the month of July, 1862. He was buried in the little cemetery of the town, and over his grave was placed a frail memorial bearing his name and the date of his death. Shortly after this some companies of the New Hampshire Volunteers, composed almost exclusively of Irishmen, lying encamped in the neighbourhood, heard of the death of "Shamrock" of the *Nation*, learned the place of interment, and resolved to erect over the grave of their gifted countryman a more suitable monument. The soldiers subscribed liberally, and one of the captains having got leave of absence to visit New Orleans, procured there a stone of pure Carara marble with a pedestal of the same material. On the slab was cut in relief a sprig of shamrock, beneath which a suitable inscription was engraved. In the haste befitting a time of peril and uncertainty, the Irish soldiers' loving work was done. "A few days previous to its accomplishment they had been engaged in a desperate combat with some of the Confederate troops, and shortly after they were marched away to other fields of action. In the peaceful interval they had raised this beautiful and enduring monument to the memory of one of the sweetest singers of their native land."[1] Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee has commemorated this touching incident in words destined to be more enduring even than that slab of pure Carara marble. In a poem of six verses he has pictured the scene as "the lion-hearted brother-band" knelt and prayed round the monument they made "for him who sang the Fatherland." Let us bid farewell to the Sisters' laureate with four of these verses:—

"God bless the brave! the brave alone
Were worthy to have done the deed,
A soldier's hand has raised the stone,
Another traced the lines men read;
Another set the guardian rail
Above thy minstrel—Innisfail!

* * * *

[1] Preface to the "Poems of Richard D. Williams."

"True have ye writ, ye fond and leal,
And, if the lines would stand so long,
Until the archangel's trumpet peal
Should wake the silent son of song,
Broad on his breast he still might wear
The praises ye have planted there!

"Let it be told to old and young,
At home, abroad, at fire, at fair;
Let it be written, spoken, sung,
Let it be sculptured, pictured fair,
How the young braves stood, weeping, round
Their exiled Poet's ransom'd mound!

* * * *

"Sing on, ye gifted! never yet
Has such a spirit sung in vain;
No change can teach us to forget
The burden of that deathless strain.
Be true like him, and to your graves
Time yet shall lead his youthful braves!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### MEETINGS—PARTINGS—EVERY-DAY LIFE AND LESSONS.

BUT while dignitaries and doctors, poets and strangers, ascended the stairs leading to Mrs. Aikenhead's apartment in high latitudes—would that the sun had photographed them as they passed processionally upwards!—her own dear friends of earlier times were not missing from the crowd. The O'Briens, and the Simpsons, and Miss Denis, for example, might constantly be seen ascending and descending the Jacob's ladder between the hospital proper and the sisters' domicile. Richard, the head of the Simpson family, a man of fine character and considerable mental power, was now the Rev. Mother's law adviser; his brothers Stephen and Thomas, and his sister Helen, were constant visitors—sympathetic and helpful.

With Mrs. O'Brien came beauty and fashion to St. Vincent's. A stranger meeting her on an afternoon, as in elegant array she crossed the corridor, might naturally wonder what brought such a figure as hers into a hospital. But truth to say, she was sometimes to be seen plainly enough attired, and it was only when on her way to or from some place of fashionable resort, or when she called in the course of a round of visits, that she appeared in such splendour. It was by no means necessary for her to return home and change her dress before going to her dear Mary Aikenhead, who knew as well as anyone

Woodburytype

Yours
most affly
Ann L. O'Farrell.

*Taken from a Miniature.*

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what is due to one's position in the world, who liked to see the *bienseances* attended to, and who could give the very best opinion as to what was tasteful, elegant, and appropriate in dress as well as in many other things. Mrs. O'Brien was regarded as a saint by those who knew her; but her spirit of religion did not lead her to shut herself up as a recluse. Her object in mixing in the world was to uphold the Catholic cause, and to prove that religion does not prevent people maintaining their social position. At the same time she was unflinchingly faithful to her obligations as a child of Holy Church. She was prominent in every charitable and religious work. The orphanages and other institutions founded at that time in the city of Dublin owed their being chiefly to Mrs. O'Brien's exertions, personal labours, and generous contributions. She spent Sunday teaching the catechism to the poor children in the different chapels, and tried to induce other ladies to join her in this work.

But, as we already know, the Stanhope-street House of Refuge was Mrs. O'Brien's favourite institution. The saving of youth from the snares of vice was one of the first good works to which she devoted her time and energy, and experience only confirmed her in the belief that one of the most blessed of institutions was that in which unprotected girls were received and trained to religion and industry. One case especially made a vivid impression on her, and she referred to it in after years as a source of great joy to her through life. It happened that in the Jervis-street hospital, which she visited regularly long before Catholic ladies were accustomed to attend the sick in such places, a poor woman was slowly dying. One day Mrs. O'Brien noticed the sufferer looking sadder than usual, and asked was there anything on her mind? had she not seen the priest and received the last sacraments? The poor creature said: "O yes, my lady; but my heart is breaking. I cannot reconcile myself to die when I think of my poor children." Mrs. O'Brien said: "What is it that distresses you? Can I do anything to make you die happy?" The woman looked fixedly at her visitor, and said: "I fear not, my lady. I have three daughters living with an uncle who has by this time, I am sure, turned them out on the street. O God! if they be lost; how can I die happy!" Mrs. O'Brien asked where the children were to be heard of, and immediately went in search of them. She found matters just as the poor mother had stated; the children had been turned out on the street, and were starving and perishing with cold. She carried them at once to Stanhope-street and settled them in a comfortable home there. Then she returned to the poor woman, who was in a state of great agitation, and approaching her she said: "My poor woman, all is right. I have found your children. I have taken them to the House of Refuge in Stanhope-street, where they will be educated, instructed in the Faith, and taught to earn their bread

respectably." The poor woman, in a transport of delight, fixed her eyes on Mrs. O'Brien, and said: "May God bless you, and open heaven for you;" and then, with the sweetest expression passing over her countenance, she gave up her soul to God.

In the management of the extern business of the Stanhope-street establishment, Mrs. O'Brien proved herself one of the most indefatigable fellow-workers of the Rev. Mother, who would receive her friend of early days even at times when no one else might be shown up to her room. They seemed to have the same thoughts, the same unbounded zeal for the salvation of souls, the same untiring spirit of labour, the same nobility of mind. Mrs. O'Brien had implicit trust in her friend's affection and judgment, confided to her all her joys and sorrows, taking her advice in temporal matters and her direction in spiritual affairs. It was said by one who was intimately acquainted with both, that: "It elevated one's idea of the noble works of God to see these two great women together." They had been considered in their earlier days to bear a striking resemblance to one another, and sometimes were taken for sisters. Mrs. Aikenhead, however, had more sweetness in countenance and manner: *she* might occasionally be somewhat impetuous; Mrs. O'Brien could now and then be imperious.

There was a strange meeting of friends at St. Vincent's in 1843, when Mrs. Lynch—Sister Ignatius—of St. Clare's Convent, came to sojourn for a little while with the companion of her youth, and receive the benefit of Dr. O'Ferrall's skill in the treatment of a painful and dangerous disease. The arrival of this unexpected guest is thus announced by Mrs. Aikenhead in a letter to the rectress of the Cork Convent:—

"I cannot write long, yet I must tell you an unlooked-for circumstance: it is truly so in every sense. We have here with us Mrs. Lynch of Harold's Cross, in hopes of averting cancer of the breast. Yet I fear it is over-late. I was not aware of the extremity of the symptoms until Tuesday last, and had a request from our venerated archbishop as soon as his grace was informed of the state of this long-tried and faithful servant of the poor, to hope we could manage to receive her and try what the success of the Divine blessing may effect by her treatment at St. Vincent's. On Thursday his grace wrote an order to the Mother Abbess of St. Clare's for the removal, and on Saturday it was effected. As I said, I fear too late, yet the tumour seems to be of a nature which might have been dispersed by *timely* treatment. We must leave all this in the great spirit of holy conformity. . . . . His grace came to visit our guest yesterday, and thanks to Almighty goodness was as vigorous as I ever saw him. After having arranged all, he went down to Elm Green, our friend Mr. Simpson's place; and when Richard, our constant friend, found that his favourite charity, St. Vincent's, could and did afford a resource to his old and beloved friend—for such is Mrs. Lynch—he requested Helen to bring me one of the prettiest notes I ever received, with an enclosure of twenty pounds, and a request that I would tell his dear friend that whilst St. Vincent's was her habitation, he claimed to be her banker."

As the fatal disease had not passed an early stage, Mrs. Lynch was not confined to bed, nor did she suffer much pain. The doctor did all that could possibly be done, and to Mrs. Aikenhead it was a comfort to tend for a while the patient sufferer, whose sojourn with the community was often referred to in after years by the sisters. It was about the strangest event that could have happened in the life of a member of a strictly enclosed Order such as that of the Poor Clares. Mrs. Lynch had not seen the Mary Aikenhead of former days for possibly thirty years; and now she found herself domesticated with the long-parted friend, saw her surrounded with a host of fellow-workers, with a multitude of the poor under her capacious roof, and having the great dream of her youth fully realised. Between the vivid memory of the past, and the solid reality of the present, Sister Ignatius was sometimes bewildered; and when she observed the Rev. Mother's commanding presence, and heard her orders given in the voice of authority, she would say in amazement: "Can this be gentle Mary Aikenhead?" Yet, during her stay at St. Vincent's she had the sorrow of seeing how great a sufferer the Rev. Mother was. In addition to her now chronic infirmities Mrs. Aikenhead had at this time an attack of the lungs and a racking cough, such as, she said, she never had in all her life. In a letter dated the Eve of the Ascension, several weeks after Mrs. Lynch's arrival at St. Vincent's, the Rev. Mother thus alludes to her own delicacy of health, and speaks of her guest:—

"I must avail myself of the first moment in which I could write to you. So, unless the holy feast has sent you direct to take your place in the heavenly mansions, I shall beg of you to unite poor heavy me in your ardent petitions, that we may prepare fitly for receiving a plenitude of those divine gifts which will not be denied to true religious, or true penitents, in the approaching great and holy Feast of Pentecost. We have need to pray, and to labour, and to suffer, for these are days of trial. As to my attack of influenza, it was not slight, and proved very tedious. Now I am in my usual way, with plenty to fill up more time than my infirmities allow me. If I be only faithful in the space granted to me it will suffice. Of course *we* want prayers; but I am induced to ask for charitable aid for my old and truly edifying friend from St. Clare's convent, who, I think you are aware, has been with us in the hope of averting the painful disease of cancer, if it be the Divine will to spare her longer, even in her present state of delicacy (for that very suffering malady is not by any means in an advanced state in her case). It seems to all informed on the subject, that her life being prolonged is calculated to be of advantage to the community of which she has been an efficient member. *Fiat voluntas Tua.* Amen. It is the wish of our dear and venerated archbishop in accordance with the opinion of our physician (Dr O'Ferrall) that she should remain a while longer at St. Vincent's."

After a residence of some months at the hospital, where she received all the aid that medical skill and tender care could bestow, Mrs. Lynch returned to St. Clare's convent, where she breathed her last on the 12th of March, 1846.

Although Mrs. Aikenhead was seldom able to visit the Novitiate in Stanhope-street, the rising generation of the Sisters of Charity were not personally unknown to her. Candidates for admission were, as a matter of course, seen by her many times previous to their entering the noviceship. Before profession, the young sisters were frequently sent to St. Vincent's, where they were under the Rev. Mother's eye, and had their disposition and capacity well tested in the employments they were put to. The novices, while at St. Vincent's, wore the black veil of the professed sisters so as not to attract the special attention of patients and visitors. The cross and ring were the only insignia missing from their costume. The Rev. Mother naturally took the deepest interest in these young sisters, and spared no pains in training the heads and hearts and hands that were to be employed in God's work. She would let nothing defective pass in them that she could amend. A sound reprehension would sometimes be administered with telling effect, but generally a quaint observation, or a striking illustration of the lesson to be enforced, or a serious word with a humorous turn, answered all the purposes of a lengthened lecture. Whether in the words themselves, or in the manner, there was something impressive; so that her expressions, though so simple, were remembered, and could be repeated twenty or thirty years after they were uttered. The sisters who were novices and in St. Vincent's during the latter years of Mrs. Aikenhead's residence there, retain the most vivid recollection of her words, and of herself personally.

She was constantly telling them they should try to cultivate any good gift that God bestowed on them, since it was for His own glory and work He gave it. They should keep their wits about them. They should not walk through the streets with their eyes cast down, so as not to know where they were going; on the contrary, they were to make it their business to know. In fine, she used to say, "we don't want children here, we want young women who have sense, and know how to use it." At their prayers, at least when said in church or in the presence of others, she liked them to kneel erect, and did not approve of bent heads, unless at the most solemn moments of the Mass, or Benediction. Those who did foolish or stupid things under the idea that they were cultivating piety she called "holy pokers." They were her special aversion. Her spirit of perfection was to do everything in its proper place, and to give each action its due completeness, that each might be fit to appear before God. Consequently she would not have her nuns pray when they ought to work: they should unite the two sisters of Bethania so perfectly that one should not interfere with the other; nor would she have any spirit of recollection that would impede the performance of appointed duties. "Now, do you know," she would say, "I don't want to have my nuns holy pokers. Perfection consists in doing our ordinary actions in a

perfect manner—doing each with the full bent of the powers of the soul."

No one was quicker than the Rev. Mother in seeing what was wanting in an act of virtue. One day Sister N. N. came to her room and said: "Rev. Mother, the wind blew high last night, and when I came to the store-room I found the two Cork crockery-pans in pieces on the floor. I left them at the window and the wind blew them in." "My heart," said the mother, "come here. Where is the humility of a Sister of Charity? You put, as it were, the fault on God Almighty, when you ought to have placed such valuable articles on the floor. You are as much use to me," she added, in her half-humorous way, "as that chair:—not so much, for the chair holds my clothes, and you are destroying things. Go out of my sight."

Her delight was to see the young sisters busy, carrying their burdens hither and thither for the poor; and of all things she liked to see them looking happy and cheerful. Noticing a sister's anxious countenance she would say: "Have you too much to do, my heart? I am afraid the yoke of the Lord is getting too heavy for you. God loves the cheerful giver. Are you tired?" "No, not tired, but a little worried, Rev. Mother." "What then, would you do if you had the care of an institution and the care of souls, when a trifle could thus put you about?" To another she would say, "Are you happy, my heart? Yes? Well then you must be good. Do *you* now try to make others happy also." It distressed her to see any of her children in tears. Something happened one day which caused her to reprove a sister, who thereupon wept bitterly. "Go now" she said, in conclusion, "and wash your face, and come back to me smiling."

And yet there were occasions when she was well pleased to know that a keen word or a reproachful look had produced its effect. "Did you meet N. N.?" she inquired of a sister who had just entered her room. "Yes, Mother, she seems in great affliction," was the reply. "I fear I did speak to her severely," said Mrs. Aikenhead. "Oh, I am sure you did, for she is breaking her heart crying." The Mother looked greatly pleased, and then said: "I am delighted to hear it. God loves a heart that is easily made to bleed. He can readily imprint his own divine characters on it."

And in the same way, though she would commend one sister for not excusing herself when reproved, she would praise another for giving an explanation, when she knew that a good motive prompted her to do so. A young sister, lately recovered from fever, was observed to go out in her summer cloak instead of the heavier one which was more suitable to her delicate condition. This act of indiscretion was reported to the Rev. Mother, who being very much displeased, sent for the sister and gave her a lecture in no sparing terms. All the time

that Mrs. Aikenhead was speaking, the sister kept turning over in her own mind whether it would be better to retire without a word, or to tell the Rev. Mother simply how it had happened that on the departure of some of the community for a country convent, her warm cloak had been required, and she was in consequence left without choice. Finally, when the Rev. Mother had made the observations she thought necessary, the sister said in all simplicity: "Now, Rev. Mother, I'll just tell you how it occurred;" and then went on to relate the incident. "You are a good child," said the Rev. Mother; "come over and kiss me. Another would have left me all my life under the impression that she really had been guilty of that culpable indiscretion."

All this time it was not the novices alone whom the Rev. Mother had to correct: sometimes she had to call Mary Aikenhead herself to account. Truth to say she *was* occasionally too hasty in reaching conclusions, and administering reproof. There were moments when she was not merely prompt, but impetuous. This perhaps did not strike the younger generation as in any way surprising. They may have thought it quite natural that when she saw, as she thought, a wrong thing done, or a deplorably foolish act committed, she should give the supposed delinquent a sound rating. The very timid, however, or the very shy were likely to take too much to heart the Rev. Mother's occasional mistakes; while in the case of those who were themselves constitutionally hasty, there was danger of misunderstanding, or even of estrangement. Those, however, who had known her in early life when she was, as Mrs. Lynch said, "gentle Mary Aikenhead," observed the change with some surprise; but they rightly attributed it to the acute spinal irritation from which she habitually suffered, and to the severity of the remedies which were prescribed for the relief of her maladies. The slamming of a door, the sense of something having gone wrong, would at times cause her almost intolerable pain. She was herself well aware of the weakness which this state of things induced, and was the first to see her error when she had been too hasty in act or expression. She would then make amends in the most touching way for any impatient word she had uttered; and in the end her children found it easier to bear an undeserved rebuke than to see the Mother humbling herself, and hear her asking their pardon for her too great precipitation. It cost her much effort to overcome this fault; but she succeeded, and as she advanced in years the old gentleness became once more habitual.

Mrs. Aikenhead's letters of this period are characteristic and interesting, and give us glimpses of the goings on at St. Vincent's. Here is a letter, written, not without interruptions, to one of her children who had been sent far away from the head superior, charged with an important mission:—

"*St. Vincent's Hospital, Stephen's-green,*
"*Dublin, 11th January,* 1841.

"DEAREST M———,

"Indeed I am mortified when I think how long a time has elapsed since you had a line from me, and I fear the great multiplicity of our occupations has not allowed time for any other to give you news of us. My dear child, your letter written during the Triduum afforded me the most sincere consolation, as it assured me that our Lord has granted you the best of all good gifts next to a lively faith—I mean self-knowlege. Like all other graces, your own effort to correspond with it will continue to increase the gift, and bring with it the graces of succour in your difficulties and temptations. You know it would be a sort of presumption to say, 'I can do all things in Him who strengthens me,' if you were to omit the necessary exertion on your part. Your character requires not so much the exercise of disengagement from creatures, as a steady effort to die to self. Be assured of it, self-love is the source from which all our trials derive their bitterness.

. . . . "Here, my dear child, is the thirteenth, and believe me actual interruptions—no want of true and tender affection and interest for you—have interfered to oppose my writing. I have been haunted with anxious apprehensions about your anxiety at not hearing from any of us, and I hoped my being confined to bed with a cold, but not a bad one, would be the means of allowing me full time to write to you. I must just tell you all our goings on in as great haste as I can write, and hope for a more quiet *week* to give you a longer letter, such as I proposed when I commenced.

"Mother Rectress (of St. Vincent's) has been kept very busy trying to bring all her books into the usually correct order, the more troublesome by reason of her long absence. Then, although not very much worse in health than hitherto, I have good reason to know that I am less able to encounter any extra exertion; therefore I was obliged to require of her to visit for me at Stanhope-street this half-year. There the Renovation did not take place until Epiphany. M. Lucy had been very poorly from the remnants of a severe cold, or Influenza. Circumstances combined to render it desirable that the clothing of Miss F——, now Sister Mary Fidelis, and of Sister Mary de Lellis (M. Whelan) should take place on the following day, the 7th instant. Our dear venerated archbishop officiated in the usual impressive and holy manner, which was well, as I don't recollect our ever having so many Protestants. The hour was one o'clock, and the company assembled upwards of a hundred. I went over about twelve, having, as usual, provided, or at least ordered all the refreshments. Mrs. O'Brien supplied beautiful jelly, and his grace actually transferred to us a curious present sent to him—no less than a plum-cake. On account of keeping all as much as possible free to attend to their holy work, I did all we could to assist, by sending over Mary Anthony with what table appurtenances they wrote for, about four o'clock on the 6th, when they had to curtail the Holy Exposition, so as to set about preparing tables, &c. &c. Of course M. Xavier was *prima donna*, she being, at least for a while, resident in Stanhope-street. Notwithstanding snow and frost the folk collected, many walked, and so would I if I could, for the state of the streets was almost glassy. Yet it was a fine day, more so than we have seen since. . . .

"I hope my silence, or rather my delay in writing has not been too great a trial to your feelings. I certainly prayed the more for you. Although I deferred sending off this on Thursday evening I have not found any more time to command. After a stormy evening and night it went on blowing and raining until twelve to-day, and then brightened. So Mrs.

O'Brien came to speak over some of our affairs before my dinner, and I could not finish for the early post. Mother Rectress says that if I finish for the late one you will receive this on Monday, and that she specially wishes you to have it in time to ask for prayers for myself and some little treat for your little flock on Tuesday, which will be my birthday. I shall enclose the half of an English ten pound note, and hope to send you the other half with a more *useful* letter than interruptions, &c. &c., have allowed this to be. M. Lucy spoke of writing to you and enclosing a little note to Mary Agnes for her feast. We must all remember her. Another feast of hers will come on the 25th, when she and all of you must pray your best for St. Mary Magdalen's. It will be the anniversary of our having undertaken the charge of the asylum in 1833—now eight years ago. The little community there will celebrate the foundation day by their renovation of holy vows. Here we shall celebrate the taking possession of this house by our renovation also, on the Feast of the Espousals, the 22nd instant. On the 21st it will be seven years since I left Sandymount and slept here; but we observe the foundation on the 23rd, it being the day our dear venerated archbishop celebrated Mass and blessed the house. Now be sure you keep a little list of all our particular days. The 29th will be the foundation day at poor old Stanhope-street. I went thither from North William-street on that day in 1819, leaving *all* the professed sisters, namely, Mother Catherine and *two* more, and taking with me just four novices: we having lost by holy deaths our two eldest professed sisters the year before; so that our entire number was eight living members. I hope *we* may continue to deserve the Divine blessing, and go on for the time to come—without making less progress—in Divine love and active service of the poor members of Christ, our Lord. Oh! may we each day and hour improve! To-morrow will be the Feast of the Most Holy Name. Let us pray for each other that it may be deeply engraven in our hearts; the precious fruit will be that each will labour more earnestly to imitate her beloved Lord and Spouse, and to promote his greater honour and glory. . . . .

"As I ask for a treat, I must enclose the price in the shape of a half sovereign. And as I am certain M. Lucy, and perhaps M. Xavier are about to write, I shall not be anxious to tell you more news; and in great haste a letter can be only chit-chat. The Christmas collection for St. Vincent's amounts to one hundred and one pounds, besides ten pounds of a legacy paid on Thursday, and nine pounds the produce of a raffle. A baby-house was purchased by Mr. Thomas Mulhall, brother to our esteemed rev. chaplain; he exerted himself, and we had no other trouble or expense. The raffle took place in our great hall. Of course we have commenced the sale for the *sixpenny*, and have this year just twice as many prizes as ever. They amount to seventy. . . . . We are already at work for the bazaar. I have got a pair of very beautiful screens hand-worked by a dear little cousin of mine who is in town (alas! a steady Protestant); birds in raised work, two on each screen, on branches of trees done in chenille.

"I must say farewell, and with true love to each one, in all sincerity, my dear child,

"Your ever affectionate in Jesus Christ,

"M. A."

It is not alone from friends in the world that the Rev. Mother is well pleased to receive little gifts for the lotteries and bazaars undertaken for the different charities: she delights in getting contributions of the same kind from the sisters, and wishes them to have always a bit of fancy work in hands which they can take up at leisure

moments. "Ask yourselves," she says, when writing to one of her communities, "whether there is any little thing you could do during the winter evenings for the bazaar for the House of Refuge. Our sisters tell me there is not a nun, even in the hospital (in Paris) who has not a piece of work always in hands, either in carpet or lace for the altar. It is surprising how much embroidery and other work is got through." Then she goes on to speak of the immense quantity of plain and fancy work done by the nuns of Orell Mount, though they have seven hours' choir duty, and seldom has anyone half an hour at a time to sit at work. She winds up with the remark that the idea of having time to one's self is very *injurious to peace and perfection*. The custom of having a piece of work to take up has been faithfully observed ever since in St. Vincent's. It has been found not only a friend to peace and perfection, but an aid to the cheerfulness both of patients and sisters. The women often help the nuns, and become so interested in a piece of fancy work as to forget half their pains. Besides, the pleasure of doing some little thing for the sisters, of whom they are generally very fond, takes off their sense of dependence. The men are equally good in their way, and do many a "handy job" with right good will, when they are sufficiently convalescent, or when their malady is not too painful or prostrating.

Mrs. Aikenhead was fond, as we have seen, of keeping anniversaries and of noting remarkable days. During her residence in St. Vincent's she celebrated, in 1840, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Irish Sisters of Charity. "As a little commemoration," she writes to one of her children, "of the first quarter century of the existence of our dear congregation, I have to send you the first volume of an Ecclesiastical History of our own dear Ireland, and the second shall be sent when published. Truly we are the successors of eminent saints, and we ought to know and emulate their virtues." The fiftieth anniversary of her first communion, the Feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, was kept two years later, as well as that of the day when the sacrament of confirmation was administered to the fervent convert by "dearly beloved and venerated Dr. Moylan." On the last-named day of jubilee, the Feast of the Visitation, she had the happiness of hearing Mass in the little chapel of the convent. In 1843, writing on the 30th of May, she says: "To-morrow thirty-one years I left Cork (Trinity Sunday). Pray that I may not have lost the great grace of holy vocation, but may preserve it against the day of awful judgment."

Later in the same year, namely, in the month of November, she thus alludes to public affairs of great importance to Irish Catholics:—

"I judge that you will either have been told, or soon will be informed of the glorious unanimity of our archbishops and bishops in regard of their steady determination to decline every proposition of provision for the

clergy, by the Government. I have not yet seen the Resolutions, which have been this morning published. The clergy and right-minded (religious) folk are in great delight; and in consequence of the turn which those fearful State Trials have taken, there is an unusually great sensation of joy and jubilee amongst the orthodox party. We must continue to pray, for *all* that has taken place seems evidently to be the fruit of prayer, and much remains to pray for before peace and good government be established. The splendid success of our Holy Catholic Church within the last years must not make us proud, but pious and zealous, exhibiting all the great virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. The last will be the ever-abundant fruit of the others; so let us pray with St. Peter for increase of Faith: it will suffice."

On another occasion, considering the miserable condition of the poor, she writes not so exultingly, yet still with a thankful heart for what the Providence of God enables her to do:—"The weather is very severe for invalids and for the poor: frost, with piercing easterly wind. The gay and the wealthy are driving about, walking, fine-dressing; and concerts, and balls at the Castle and elsewhere are going on gaily at this season. There is an incessant rolling of carriages day and night in this quarter, and I suppose elsewhere; yet trade is said to continue bad, and the poor not seeming to be any way relieved by the workhouses—at least *we* have not any diminution of the usual scenes of want and misery. However, neither do we find any diminution of the means: so while our sisters are enabled to go on as usual with the poor sick, we cannot be sufficiently thankful."

Mrs. Aikenhead at that time and in after years, had a good deal to do with printing. She brought out translations, compilations, and suitable editions of standard books, for the use of her communities; and very particular she was about paper and type and binding: everything should be done in the best style. Certain friends of the congregation also undertook and completed the translation of important works, and published them in the hope that the profits of the sale would produce something handsome for the charities carried on by the sisters. In these undertakings the Rev. Mother naturally took a very special interest. The following refers principally to printing and publishing, and is from a letter written to Cork in September, 1843:—

"I saw Mr. Browne since you wrote, and he seemed disappointed by your not sending the manuscript of the Novena. He seemed quite up to our publishing it. I rather understood you to say *you* had not given up the hope; so may our Lord prosper all to his greater glory! Already I have had cash for eighteen copies, and twelve copies of the forthcoming fifth part of 'Nouet;' may our Lord speed that also! I shall look for an opportunity to forward you a copy of a most interesting work, the 'Notes of Cardinal Pacca's Ministry, and of His Holiness Pius the Seventh's Capture and Captivity.' We have had it for some years in French. Now it is really well translated by our good friend and benefactor the Honble. Colonel Southwell; by whose preface you will find that the profits are intended for St. Vincent's Hospital. Now, the truth is that if London

printers and booksellers so manage as to return anything in the shape of profit, it will be rather marvellous. However, the *intention* and *attention* of our benefactor are not the less to be valued. If you can dispose of any copies it will be a means of *advertising* our hospital. . . . . I am sure you will be much interested by Cardinal Pacca's book. Inquire whether the Rev. M. O'S—— has the work in Italian; if not this English translation [he will find] by far preferable to the French. Have you heard anyone speak of our Rev. Dr. Miley's work, 'Rome as it was under the Pagans, and as it became under the Popes?' The subject is truly interesting, and the style most justly admired. This is an expensive book: 24 shillings, 2 vols.; but I can give you a lend. I had a most complimentary note from the rev. author with a copy."

The "Meditations of Père Nouet," referred to above, were translated from the French by Father Michael O'Sullivan of Cork, and the profits were given for the benefit of the sick-poor under the care of the Sisters of Charity. Mrs. Aikenhead took great interest in the progress of the work as it came out in parts. These meditations from that time forward were adopted for general use in all the convents of the Order. Writing to Mrs. Coleman, the Rev. Mother says: "How truly instructive, consoling, and in every way admirable I find the meditations, I cannot well express! I hope we shall have the great comfort of seeing the invaluable work completed. Above all, may we each derive the profit to be obtained!" Again she says: "Our dear meditations seem to improve wonderfully. May His own infinite love reward our benefactor!"

The following letter was written when St. Vincent's had been about nine years established, and was addressed to a superior who had a particularly difficult post to fill. It is animating and pleasantly discursive:—

"*The Sisters of Charity, St. Vincent's Hospital,*
"*Dublin, 4th February,* 1844.

"Well now, my dear child, I must begin to let you behind the curtain, that you may pray the more for the poor Head Superior, and form your own heart and head to comfort yourself to the best of your power in all the variety of trials of patient conformity which Rectresses and all in any degree of authority must be exercised in. Honestly I must inform you that the delay about the young woman is entirely attributable to our rather unusual occupation in this great house. I hope to have a letter for you from dear M. Joanna, who is as happy as you could desire, before Lent at least. Hers is a really active post, and as yet we have not got all matters into regular order in our housekeeping department. One hundred and twenty, betimes five or six more, to provide meals for three times a day regularly, is no trifle. We have been obliged to increase the servants in number, and also domestic sisters; and to see that all these perform their respective employs will fall to poor Sister Sub-Ministress. We have a very steady postulant aiding M. Joanna, and another to succeed her when she (the postulant, Miss Alicia B——) is in retreat, preparing for her holy clothing. The successor will be, I think, the sister of dear M. Columba. So, dear M. Agnes, I think our household departments have great claims on you and yours for a charitable aid of prayer.

"We had dear Mother Rectress confined to bed during all the week of the professions. Up she got last Sunday for a holy Mass at ten o'clock which a rev. friend celebrated for us, that we might set about our holy Triduum preparing for Renovation, which took place on the 1st instant: to celebrate the feast of our glorious Patroness, St. Bridget. All, except poor me, able to perform that sweet and solemn rite; but I was able to give the instructions during the four evenings, thank God.

"And just as Mother Rectress set about the *awful* closing up of her accounts for last year, on the Feast of the Purification arrives a note entreating our charity for a family of her intimate acquaintance—Mr. Langdale, late of Bath, who brought over his wife and family last summer on account of the lady's health, in hopes that native air may be of service. It has been, but Mr. L. is himself now at the point of death. Pray for him, who is indeed a saintly man; but to leave a beloved wife in poor health, surrounded with a family of eight children, requires a real sacrifice. This gentleman was the friend who transacted all for Mother Rectress' journey and voyage, when she came to us in 1829, and she has the comfort of now being a great source of consolation to those deservedly esteemed friends. . . .

"I need scarcely say, love to each dear sister, and *pray* very fervently for us. Dear Mother M. Lucy is better, but very delicate; self—busy, and not any attack as yet since winter, thank God: just having spent a great deal of very precious time sitting for my portrait, and also sitting with Mrs. O'Brien, who has consented to get hers taken for us. Then, our dear holy archbishop condescended to give us a portrait of his venerated self. The artist is an Irishman of very considerable talent. He resides in London, but comes to his mother and sisters for a month or so each year. He is very young—twenty-five. All declare never were such likenesses—your old *madre* looking *young*. I think our countryman will make a great name. Judges tell me he is the first artist that has appeared in Dublin, and will rank at the head even in London. Dear, dear Ireland, how my heart rejoices and glories in all her excellences!

"May it please our heavenly Father to grant the first and ardent prayer of my poor heart, in the real solid virtues and excellences of each dear sister; and that each and all of us may glorify God by being instrumental in the salvation of souls, wherever He is pleased to employ our dear congregation! Amen. Amen. Dear M. Agnes, ever be assured of the affectionate interest and solicitude of your attached in Jesus Christ.

"M. A.

"Send the second volume of the 'Life of St. Vincent de Paul' to me. It will be very welcome for our next foundation, and I will, God willing, send you some other work."

No matter what might be the paramount interests of the hour, Mrs. Aikenhead never forgot the friends of her youth, or ceased to take the liveliest interest in their welfare, and in the education and progress through life of their children. The younger generation of these families grew up in habits of intimacy with the Sisters of Charity, looking on the nuns as their aunts or their grandmothers, and going to the convent to receive religious instruction and to be prepared for the sacraments. Mrs. Aikenhead well understood the duties of Christian men and women living in the world, and none could give a sounder opinion in questions of secular life. The solid piety and the spirit of heroism which she often found in people of the

world edified her greatly. "I have often occasion to witness great conformity, and almost heroic practices in secular persons," she once observed to a religious; "may we remember," she added, "that we are bound to excel them."

So much does the Rev. Mother take to heart the loss of the friends of her youth, that those who are about her dread having to tell her that death has snatched any of the loved ones away. This was the case when the elder Dr. Bullen died. Yet the bearer of the sad tidings had also a great consolation to offer. The death-bed of the kind friend and truly charitable physician was surrounded with all the comforts that religion can bring to the departing soul. Mrs. Coleman writes herself to the Rev. Mother, lest the sad announcement should first reach her through the public papers, and Mrs. Aikenhead thus replies:—

"*The Sisters of Charity, St. Vincent's Hospital,*
"*Stephen's-green, Dublin, 9th December,* 1844.

"My dear Mother Rectress,

"Most sincerely I thank you for writing as promptly as in your power. May I be ever grateful to Almighty God for his great mercy in behalf of my oldest and most dear friend! And had I only learned the demise of my truly excellent friend by the papers, my sincere sorrow would have been without solace. But now, though I feel deeply for and with my dear Mrs. Bullen, there is a happy feel of gratitude over my heart. Indeed my prayers were not ever omitted for the happy event with which the news of death is accompanied. *Prayer* works miracles; and if a cup of cold water brings a reward, we may well hope that the benevolence and many real Christian virtues of the dear departed pleaded powerfully. The divine grace—the effectual grace—has been granted, and in the midst of sorrow my heart rejoices. Yet I know the loss which Mrs. Bullen must feel. Even her own children were not perhaps aware of all the warm intensity of her early affections, as I often witnessed the ardour of her just admiration for excellences which shone in days long past. Of course years have brought illness on my dear Mrs. Bullen, yet whilst her heart beats her feelings will be trying; except in as much as the grateful sense of *all* the wonders of mercy will raise her heart above the passing trials of time to look with faith and hope to a blessed eternity.

"I feel delighted in this dear friend finding comfort in your visits, which I know you will continue. Say all you know I really feel, and assure her that at the greater number of our holy altars the most Holy Sacrifice shall be offered to-morrow for the dear and ever-respected friend of my youth—almost the kind and affectionate son of my dear parents. I have sent your note to St. Mary's Priory, Kilcornan, and begged to have a Mass on Wednesday for the same intention. A Mass shall be offered at one or other holy altar under my power for the remaining days of the nine; and the prayers of all sisters and poor in our houses. . . . . Now, with true love to each dear sister, I must only add, that I remain,

"Ever affectionately yours in J. C.,
"M. A."

In her next letter to the same correspondent Mrs. Aikenhead thus returns to the subject:—"I shall be glad to learn how all will be

settled, and whether Mrs. B. may think of one of her married children residing with her. Perhaps she will not wish to leave the house wherein she spent so many years (half a century) with the valued and respected departed. I witnessed some of those years spent in a state of more peaceful enjoyment than falls to the lot of many in the world."

Throughout all this time there was, of course, cause for grief nearer home, and the Mother had to lament the loss of her own children called away in the midst of their work, or when their day in the vineyard had only just begun. In the words we are about to quote she refers to the death of one of the younger members of the congregation, Sister Mary Vincent Aylward. This sister was beloved by the community, and much respected by externs. While still in her noviceship she had zealously taken part in the difficult and dangerous service of the cholera hospital; and after her profession devotion to the sick-poor was still her characteristic. For some time before her death she was one of Mother Catherine's community in Gardiner-street, and there she died of brain fever in the month of March, 1845.

"About the time your welcome lines reached me," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "you will have had my *serious* packet of the 7th instant; and I trust in the divine mercy your charity has ere now been effectual on behalf of our dear departed Sister Mary Vincent. Good and very amiable she was; but, oh! her dear soul is safe, and if yet she require our aid of prayers still we are well secured (as far as mortals can) that she will enjoy the blessed union with our Lord and loving spouse whose own she was and is. Happy are those who die in the Lord; and such we have every reason to hope is her state. To be out of the *power* of any temptation is bliss. But, my dear mother, you and I, and all our dear sisters around you, ought to *love* what our heavenly Father ordains for us, and to bear ever in mind that *it is a glorious lot to live and be allowed to labour for God.* This I learned from the dying lips of a young and saintly nun, when near her last struggle, and I have often thought that if anyone ever died in the enjoyment of a certain conviction of the divine presence, that holy soul was [the] one. So, my dear, let us ever glory in our exercises of mind and of body in this life, trying to live by faith. Oh, may we truly love our God, and ever accept the crosses He appoints! Amen."

This thought of its being a glorious lot to live and labour for God was a ruling idea in the Rev. Mother's mind, and she earnestly sought to communicate it to all who came under her influence. She could not endure the sisters to wish for death until it actually came. Above all she objected to their praying for an early call, as many holy souls are in the habit of doing; or making little compacts with one another, as some had done, to the effect that whosoever went to heaven first should use her influence there to obtain that the survivor should speedily follow. This objection on the Rev. Mother's part was brought to a climax when, on the death of a beloved and holy sister, another

house rent free, and guaranteed the support of the community by a charity sermon. This was certainly not a tempting offer, and criticism may have been somewhat severe on Mrs. Aikenhead for accepting it. She, however, liked the prospect of establishing a community in that eminently charitable and Catholic city. She was herself remotely connected with it; and she used to say that she ought to like Waterford—her grandmother's native place. There were great friends of the congregation living in, or connected with Waterford, who had been for some time anxiously desiring and waiting for an opportunity of introducing a colony of the Sisters of Charity into the diocese. When the bishop resolved to establish a religious house devoted to the poor in his episcopal city, these good friends helped to make the way easier than it otherwise would have been for the introduction of Mrs. Aikenhead's community. One of those who had most ardently desired to see Sisters of Charity labouring for the poor of Waterford, was the Rev. Mother's dear friend, Miss Christian Quan. This lady kept a little journal in which the arrival of the sisters in Waterford, and the history of the first days of their residence in the new home, are told with a very pleasant quaintness. But before we transplant the miniature history into our pages, we must say a word about the writer of it, this excellent friend of the Rev. Mother and her children. The story of her own hidden life of self-sacrifice and cheerful piety reads like a chapter out of the "Lives of Saints," and we shall now take it almost literally from the Annals of the congregation, merely premising that she was a native of Waterford, that her mother was of high family, and that her father was a partner of one of the Wyses, and a merchant of great respectability.

Even in her infancy Christian did not belie her name. She was singularly pious. One day, when she was about six years of age, and spending some time in London with her friends, she was taken to Hampstead by her mother, who purposed visiting a friend there. The child was left alone in the carriage, and presently a poor man of venerable appearance came to beg an alms. Christian had a halfpenny and a shilling—the first shilling she had ever called her own. She gave the halfpenny to the poor man, who smiled, seemed grateful, but still remained at the carriage window looking at her. She was embarrassed; she felt as if the old man knew she had the shilling and was asking her for it; and the thought crossed her mind that it might be our Lord Himself in this disguise; for her mother had already stored her mind with the beautiful legends of the saints. Would she, could she refuse Him? Without a moment's hesitation she handed the shilling to the mendicant. The benign look of the old man, and the feeling of happiness that filled her own breast were never forgotten by her; and shortly before her death she referred to the incident and recalled with joy that infantine experience.

At eight years of age she was sent to the school of the Abbé Caron, the author of the "Pious Biography," and afterwards to that of the Benedictine Nuns at Bodney—the community now at Princethorp.

She returned from school at the age of seventeen, and shortly afterwards received a proposal of marriage; but the character of the gentleman did not bear investigation, and he was judged unworthy of her. About a year later she received another proposal, and in this she took considerable interest. The match was judged by her parents to be a very advantageous one, and arrangements were made for her marriage. Meanwhile Christian, whose first wish was to do in all things the will of God, prayed earnestly over the matter. One day, in particular, she, with the utmost fervour, implored Almighty God that if the proposed alliance would in any degree separate her heart from Him or endanger her eternal salvation, He would mercifully interfere and put a stop to it. Evidently her prayer was heard: from that hour no further mention was made of the marriage. She was not told how or why it came to be broken off; nor did she ever inquire, so firmly convinced was she that the hand of God was in the matter.

When about nineteen years of age she felt a strong inclination to a religious life, and after much prayer and consultation with her director, Father Peter Kenny, she succeeded three years later, at the age of twenty-two, in obtaining the consent of her parents to enter the noviceship of the Sisters of Charity. Mrs. Aikenhead was at that time staying with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. John O'Brien, at Rahan Lodge, and the cells and chapel were being erected in Stanhope-street, preparatory to the removal thither from William-street of the sisters who were to make the first foundation of the congregation. She was particularly anxious that there should be as little delay as possible in bringing the work to completion, since there was among the candidates for admission a young lady highly gifted by nature and grace, who, as she had been educated with the Benedictines at Bodney, would be greatly disappointed if she did not find among the Irish Sisters of Charity all that would facilitate the strict observance of religious life. Accordingly, when all was ready at the novitiate house, this young lady, Miss Christian Quan, entered along with other aspirants.

She had been only a few months in the enjoyment of her newly-acquired happiness, when a great sacrifice was required at her hands. Father Kenny, who had encouraged her to surmount every obstacle that opposed her leaving the world, now told her that she had done all that God expected of her: that her sacrifice was to be like that of Abraham—made with the utmost integrity and generosity, but not required in detail; and that now it was manifestly the will of God that she should return to the bosom of her family, where her mother's state of

health and other circumstances required her presence. She obeyed; but before leaving Dublin she went to the little chapel of the Jesuits in Hardwick-street, and there, pouring forth her soul in fervent supplication, she besought Almighty God that if it were the divine will that she should live *in* the world, He would so mercifully order things as that she never could be *of* the world.

Shortly after her mother's edifying death, her father, who was supposed to be in great affluence, lost all he possessed, and not a remnant of his fortune was saved on which he and his family could live. They had a very wealthy connection, and several friends came forward offering to adopt the different members of Mr. Quan's family, but Christian would not hear of such an arrangement. Her idea was that as God had blessed her with talents and a good education, it was her duty to use them for the support of her family, and not allow her near relations to be dependent on the bounty of anyone. She therefore opened a little school, with the profits of which she hoped to be able to support her aged father, a younger sister, and a maiden aunt, whose fortune having been in Mr. Quan's hands perished with the rest.

Many and great were the trials poor Christian had to encounter in her undertaking. She met with opposition even from those who were deriving advantage from her industry and self-devotedness. Her whole connection looked on her as a disgrace to them, and those who had been her most intimate friends forbore to recognise her. Many a wound was inflicted on her affectionate and sensitive heart. The maiden aunt whom, to soothe her father's mind on his death-bed, she had promised to support, was a vain selfish woman who gave a great deal of trouble even while she was in health, and became a terribly heavy burden when she was attacked with a painful lingering disease. When the old woman became hopelessly ill, Christian's care of her never relaxed. The good niece procured for her all that money could purchase—medicine, attendance, and the little luxuries which gratify an invalid; and this at the sacrifice of actual necessaries for herself and sister. But no effort on her part seemed capable of stirring any grateful or generous feeling in the heart of the selfish woman. At length Christian one day gave the last pound she had in fee to a physician, in the hope of procuring that solace for the mind of her irritable patient which no money could procure for the poor doomed body. By chance this came to the ears of the invalid; and she who had never before evinced the slightest sentiment of thankfulness or affection, now sent for Christian, and blessing her in the most solemn manner, prayed that God would never allow her to want a pound again. It seemed prophetic; for, from that day forth the sisters were never in want, although up to that time it was with the utmost difficulty they had struggled on. The change of sentiments in the poor

aunt were of course gratifying to nature; but Christian's reward was to be of a higher order, and she had the happiness of seeing the sufferer become truly patient, pious, and resigned, and of witnessing her happy death.

It had always been the fondest wish of Christian's heart, since it did not please Divine Providence to permit her to remain in the congregation of the Sisters of Charity, to aid in establishing a community in her native city, Waterford; and this desire gave an impulse to her exertions, and sanctified all her labours. By the strictest economy, and the produce of a little remnant of family property which unexpectedly fell into her possession she contrived to put together a trifle towards the desired good work. A few years before her death she had the happiness of seeing the foundation made in Waterford, to which she intended should revert, after the death of her sister, the little all which she should have amassed, and to increase which she still continued to keep the school, though with great difficulty, owing to the declining state of her health. That school was a blessing to the city, for in it she trained many young girls not only in all the acquirements of refined education, but in the practice of virtue and solid piety. Several of her pupils became members of religious communities, and among them were some whom she had gratuitously educated with the hope of obtaining for them that desired advantage.

It was a joyous day in Christian's life when the first two Sisters of Charity arrived in Waterford and took up their temporary abode in her house. She kept the record, as already said, of those happy days, and sent it to Mrs. Aikenhead to gladden her heart and bring the little scenes and incidents of the foundation vividly before her mental vision. The simple story was read and re-read with delight, and then embodied in the *Annals* of the congregation, whence it is now taken, word for word, and laid before a wider audience than ever Christian Quan supposed would hear her name, or read her artless narrative:—

"DEAR AND RESPECTED REV. MOTHER,

"To you I dedicate this little narrative of the foundation of your congregation in Waterford. I have not asked your permission to do so, considering it justly your property; neither do I claim forgiveness for not allowing an abler pen than mine to trace the little history. I have taken it as a right, grounded not only on respect and affection for you, but on the ardent desire you know I entertained many years ago, before your institute was known to the citizens of Waterford, that a house of Sisters of Charity should be established in my native city. Of all the blessings with which Providence has surrounded us, is there one that creates more enjoyment than memory? It gives a charm to the dullest season—it opens a sunny

landscape on the gloomiest day; thus has it, dear mother, during twenty-three years, often brought me back to the summer of 1819, when, seated by your side in the garden of the noviceship house, I poured forth into your willing heart, my ardent hopes for this foundation: in mere perspective it caused me exquisite pleasure. Authors usually claim from a liberal public, indulgence for their defects: I send my little work to a friend's chamber, without fear of censure, without a misgiving as to its success. The good that has been, and will yet be done, by your congregation, is not to be recompensed by words of praise; nor the source whence it emanates to be addressed in the language of this world.—'After her virgins shall be brought to the king.'—Ps. xliv. 15. 'For she glorifieth her nobility by being conversant with God: yea, and the Lord of all things hath loved her.'—Wisdom, viii. 3.

"It had been arranged that in March, 1842, five of the Sisters of Charity were to proceed to Waterford for the purpose of founding a house of their institute. But this little community was to be introduced under more favourable auspices than those which even the zeal of our holy bishop, Dr. Foran, had at first intended. This blessing for the city of Waterford was reserved for the Month of Mary. It seemed to be a recompense our holy Mother obtained for the Catholic citizens who honoured her so specially, that they were the first in Ireland who publicly and perseveringly practised the sweet devotion of the Month of May. What greater proof could this 'powerful Virgin' give of her protection than by sending her own devoted servants to comfort the afflicted poor of Waterford. On the 1st of May, Dr. Foran assisted at the consecration of Dr. Walsh for the diocese of Nova Scotia. His Lordship's visit to Dublin afforded him the opportunity of putting his intention into execution. Two of the religious, Mother Francis Magdalen, rectress of St. Vincent's, and Sister Mary Xavier, left Dublin on the 9th of May, the feast of St. Gregory Nazianzen, in the company of Dr. Foran, his chaplain, the Rev. Richard Fitzgerald, and the Rev. Martin Flynn, P.P., Ballybricken. The company, assuming the intimacy of old acquaintances, beguiled the road with agreeable conversation; interrupting it at stated times to discharge those sacred duties which the good religious never lays aside: which call home the thoughts, and lift the spirit to that communion of saints which is such a happy and distinguishing mark of the children of Christ.

"About nine o'clock at night the coach reached the bridge of Waterford. Mr. Meagher, my brother-in-law, met it at the Kilkenny side, and conveyed the nuns in his carriage to our home: we being the first who were honoured by affording hospitality to the sisters. On the following morning, the 10th of May, the bishop celebrated the Holy Sacrifice in our little chapel, dedicated to the Holy Cross by the late bishop of the diocese, Dr. Abraham. After breakfast the religious,

accompanied by Dr. Foran, drove to the house which had been purchased for them, thence to the great church, the bishop's house, and the Ursuline convent: with all they were greatly pleased. The good religious of St. Mary's were most attentive, and solicited as a favour that their community should henceforth be united with religious affection to the congregation; and they soon gave proofs of their desire of being considered as sisters. The evening of this day was closed by a circumstance which added considerably to the happiness of Mother rectress and her companion: it was the arrival of Mother de Chantal, rectress of the house in Cork, who, being on her way to Dublin, was desired to pass through Waterford, that her advice and experience might assist in forming plans for the alterations of the house.

"May 11th. The Rev. Dr. O'Brien celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, and after breakfast the three sisters visited their house, making such observations as would enable them to form a correct judgment of the changes necessary to be made. At this time the house was inhabited by the Rev. Martin Flynn and his curates, and the sisters feared to appear ungracious by hastening their departure: but charity is all in all; each party sought only the accommodation of the other; so, the departure and taking possession will be accomplished with the kindest feeling. Christina Meagher presented a statue of the Blessed Virgin for the new convent: this was the first donation received. The following day brought a most cordial note from the superior of the Ursuline convent (St. Mary's), begging the sisters would spend a day with her community. The note was answered in the kindest terms, but the invitation declined; and in it was explained how the sisters had been brought to visit at their convent by the bishop, without their having been aware of his intention till they were at the gate. The days are now devoted to giving orders for furniture, directing workmen, and examining resources. To help these latter Mr. Meagher gave a donation of £100, and permission to undertake the fitting up of the chapel at his expense.

"Sunday, 15th May. Feast of Pentecost. This day was devoted to thanking our good Lord for the many marks of His amiable providence. All the relics in our chapel were exposed, and lamps kept burning before them; as a silent petition that He would be pleased to perfect the work. Miss Meany having promised to be a liberal benefactor to the Sisters of Charity, special prayers were offered that the old lady might carry out her good intentions. The Presentation nuns sent a present of butter and vegetables. Dr. Foran visited Miss Meany to beg she would kindly give the sisters a small yard which adjoins the convent garden. Mrs. Smith of Waterside, who is in the marble business, has promised a chimney-piece for the sacristy. Mother rectress impressed on us the necessity of commencing the

good work *in earnest*, and arrangements were made to divide the labour, and give each her portion. Mother de Chantal and Sister M. Xavier are to commence the missionary duties by visiting the sick-poor in the mornings, and to assist the work in the leisure hours. Hannah is to make all the purchases—linens, calicoes, &c. I am to receive the visitors, sick-calls, and go of all the messages.

"May 17th. The sisters requested the bishop's permission to commence their missionary duties. To this he willingly consented, and was about giving some considerable alms, but the nuns, knowing the many claims on his generosity, refused to take more than a handsel. So he gave Mother de Chantal a shilling, and Sister Mary Xavier sixpence, adding with paternal affection his blessing, that the grain of mustard seed might produce a hundredfold. Mr. Meagher, who was present, gave £1 for the poor. The two good Sisters of Charity opened the mission, being guided by the Rev. Michael Burke. What a happy day is this for the poor of Waterford! The wants of the wretched are few, but the means of gratifying even these are not within their reach; and they would remain destitute of support in their affliction but for the beautiful Order of the Sisters of Charity raised for them by the love of their heavenly Father. Oh, how holy and how lovely is the calling of the Sisters of Charity who have been appointed by God to soften the yoke of poverty, and to instil the consoling truth that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to the weight of glory prepared for them in the next life! Is there a labour more noble than that of the Sisters of Charity?

"Dr. Foran took the sisters to see Miss Meany. The good nuns of the Presentation convent offered to assist us by doing our needle-work. Mr. Curtis made a present of a clock. Subscriptions for the poor began to come in: £5 from Mr. Maurice Ronayne; £10 from Mr. M. Shea; 2s. 6d. for the poor and the makings of a soutane from the Rev. Michael Burke, &c. &c. Every leisure moment is devoted to cutting out the house linen to be sent to the Presentation convent; and the good nuns send back every evening the portion done, which is finished in the nicest manner. Mother de Chantal left us, proceeding to Dublin with the Rev. M. Burke.

"Thursday, 25th. Feast of Corpus Christi. This day all labour ceased. What sweet refreshment! How delightful to be called from the occupations of this world to dwell a day with the hidden God!

"Friday, 27th, was a day of remarkable interest and blessing to our foundation. At 10 o'clock a sweeping brush was sent over to Lady-lane to sweep the *big dirt* off the floor of the room in which Miss Meany was to be received. A small table, six chairs, port, sherry, and a few biscuits were sent for her comfort and refreshment. Dr. Foran, Mr. Meagher, and the two religious were in attendance, and in,

shall I say? *anxious* expectation of the arrival of the good old lady :— at least if their resignation freed them from anxiety, I know others who were not so good. As the clock struck twelve she alighted at the door, accompanied by Mr. Kearney, and aided by a walking-stick. Dr. Foran and Mr. Meagher met her in the hall, and led her to the room prepared for her reception, where Mother Francis Magdalen, and Sister Mary Xavier were awaiting her arrival. After the first greetings, Miss Meany declared the object of her mission, assuring all present that her intention was to aid the foundation as much as in her power; in proof of which she handed Mother rectress £200 as her first donation, and gave also the yard adjoining their garden. This has been a fortunate day, and the gifts of Providence have been received with gratitude. Mother rectress has announced to us that the following day, being the last Saturday of the month, she and her companion will be in retreat; but it will end at eight o'clock, as their sisters are expected from Dublin.

"Saturday, 28th. This has been another day of fruitful events. I left my holy nuns at the Manor, with Mr. Wyse's kind permission, where they will spend three hours at their spiritual exercises. I locked them up, too, though there is little fear of the birds seeking to escape; but we shall not enjoy their society till eight o'clock. Mr. Meagher is gone across the bridge to meet the day coach, and bring our most welcome expected guests to meet their sisters.

"Sunday 29th. This morning the religious appeared in their choir-cloaks at Mass—they are a great improvement to their dress. Dr. Foran paid us an early visit to welcome the newcomers: Mrs. Gallwey and Mrs. Germaine (Sister Magdalen Regis, and Sister Mary Philip); the vestments they brought were inspected and much admired. The work at Lady-lane progresses quickly. This has indeed been a beautiful month in the Catholic history of Waterford: a year of blessings to the poor:—Who does not feel grateful to God for the favours his Blessed Mother has obtained for them? The poor are *her* care, and she has sent them *her treasures:* those who will visit and comfort them when they are sick and desolate; who will instruct the ignorant; whose sweetness of manner will attract to God the most obdurate; and who will lead the dying sinner by their pious exhortations to sighs and tears of repentance: those, in fine, whose superior minds and exalted virtues hidden under the lowly habit of religion, though unknown to the world, reflect as a body honour on the Church of God. May you, O 'Help of Christians,' and 'Comfort of the afflicted,' be ever praised and glorified for this proof of your love for my native city!

"The alterations at Lady-lane advance so quickly that they whisper an invitation to the religious to prepare for their departure hence. It will be a painful pleasure to separate from those we so

highly respect and love; pain to lose their holy, cheerful society, pleasure to see them fulfil the object of their mission to Waterford. It is decided that the sisters take possession of their house on the 16th of June, feast of St. Francis Regis. It would be impossible to detail all that is done each day; but neither religious nor *extern* sisters have a moment to spare. As to the Mother rectress, she undergoes many changes during the day, but there is no period of chrysalis previous to her changes. She is at one time director of spiritual exercises, then builder; now a housemaid, presently scrivener; and ends the day in the domestic and feminine occupation of needle-woman.

"June 8th. Pugin has given the designs for the decoration of the chapel, and promises it shall be a gem. Mr. Meagher has given him a commission to send from England whatever he considers necessary to render the work complete. Christina is making the altar-linen that it may be blessed with the vestments on the 16th.

"June 12, Sunday. The rest of this day has afforded my sister and me more time for thought than we wished. We feel lonesome whenever we contemplate the intended separation. Since the arrival of the nuns, our children have been imploring as a special favour that they shall be allowed to make them some present. After considering what would be most useful, we decided on making a purchase of glass —which was presented to-day to the nuns. All the day has been spent arranging the house, and the nuns did not return to us till half-past four o'clock. As this is the last night we are to have the happiness of having the sisters under our roof, Mother rectress prolongs the night recreation. What liberty of spirit true piety gives! The religious would rather abate a little their customs than appear ungracious.

"June 15. The immediate preparations for taking possession occupied the whole of this day; and at seven o'clock in the evening the good sisters left our house: my sister, my niece, and I followed. On our arrival at Lady-lane we had to prepare the community-room for a chapel. The altar-box and the table belonging to it were sent by Mr. Meagher; our house was able to send them a small tabernacle, and some other trifles, so that it was soon in good order. The refectory was then prepared for morning. As we were about to take leave a small box and note were handed in, directed to Mrs. MacCarthy. The letter was in the kindest terms of congratulation; the box contained pious books, Agnus Dei, and a relic of St. Francis Regis. The hour then warned us to depart, and we took our leave and returned home. The whole house seemed abandoned; as we passed to our rooms a feeling of lonesomeness stole over us; but there was after all more pleasure than sorrow in the events of the day: did we not feel it so, it would have been inconsistency.

"We feel most grateful to you, dear Rev. Mother, for selecting our house to be honoured by the residence of your holy religious. It is a pride to us to have been so intimately associated with *them* for so many weeks, and to have given some assistance to the labour necessary to the foundation. It has sometimes been a mortification to us that we had but the widow's mite to offer; so it is consoling to think it is *motive* not deed which reaps the full harvest.

"June 16th. Feast of St. John Francis Regis. We repaired to the convent at half-past seven. Dr. Foran said Mass at eight, and deposited the Most Holy Sacrament in the tabernacle. After Mass the nuns entertained at breakfast the bishop, the Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, the Rev. James Cooke, Mr. Meagher, his daughter Christina, Johannah Quan, and

"CHRISTIAN QUAN."

Mrs. MacCarthy and Mrs. Hennessy returned home; the community was increased by a reinforcement from Dublin; and Mrs. Gallwey having been appointed rectress, the work of visiting the sick and giving religious instruction was carried on with unflagging zeal. When Providence gave the sisters the means of opening schools the sphere of their usefulness was greatly increased. From small beginnings they advanced to great things, and in the course of a few years the Waterford convent with its numerous annexes became one of the most important and interesting houses of the congregration. No doubt the convent of Our Lady of Charity, Lady-lane, had its share of difficulties and trials like the rest; but Mrs. Aikenhead's mind was always at peace about that house, for there, as at Cork, the superior was one after her own heart—a true disciple and a most dear friend.

Dr. Foran's successor in the See of Waterford proved like him a good father to the community. Alluding to him—Dr. O'Brien—Mrs. Aikenhead says: "As to Waterford, the bishop is truly one of those whom God grants as angels to his holy Church."

Mr. Meagher, whose generous gifts to the new establishment are spoken of above, proved a life-long friend; and his son, Thomas Francis, afterwards of Young Ireland celebrity, General of Brigade in the United States army, and Governor of Montana Territory, used to go to the convent when a little fellow to learn his letters and his catechism.

Christian Quan always continued devoted and helpful. Mrs. Aikenhead's letters to Waterford contain many references to "dear Sister Christian;" and when special prayers are being offered up, "our dear sister of the Mall" is sure to be informed so that she may join in the petition. Genial, self-forgetting, holy, the Sisters of Charity regarded her as "a very type of finished virtue;" and indeed she remains to this day one of the sweetest memories of those who

knew her. A few years after the foundation was made in Waterford she was attacked by a painful and fatal disease. In her last days she received many consoling visits from the sisters of Lady-lane; and on the 9th of April, 1845, as we read on a marble tablet erected to her memory in the Cathedral of Waterford, she died "strong in faith, full of good works, of holy suffering, and of peace."

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## CHAPTER VI.

### AUSTRALIAN MISSION—PRESTON—FATHER KENNY'S FAREWELL—CLARINBRIDGE.

ABOUT three years after the opening of St. Vincent's Hospital, Mrs. Aikenhead, in compliance with the urgent request of Dr. Polding, Archbishop of Sydney, and of his Vicar-General, Dr. Ullathorne, sent out a small colony of sisters to New South Wales to commence what she hoped would become a flourishing congregation in that distant land. Obviously it was too far removed from the parent stock to remain under its government, but the good it has achieved throws a reflected light on her without whose generous impulse it had never been; who deeply sympathised in its object, laboured to give it a fair start on its high mission; made the sacrifice for its sake of members whose services were precious to her and necessary to the work at home; and who rejoiced in its outgoing with all her soul as a truly apostolic undertaking. As the congregation obliges none of its members to go on distant missions, still less to enter on such as would be so remote as to cut them off completely from its obedience, Mrs. Aikenhead simply signified to the sisters that such a project was in contemplation, and that any who were willing to take part in it should notify their wishes to her. She also caused to be read in all the houses of the congregation a pamphlet written by Dr. Ullathorne in which he gave a harrowing description of the state of convict life in Australia and invited labourers to that vineyard: stating at the same time his conviction that the Sisters of Charity by their influence and instruction could alone work a change in, at least, the female part of the convict population.

The first who offered herself for the Australian Mission was Sister Mary John Cahill; and this she did in the concise and nervous terms of the following letter:—

"*Upper Gardiner-street, 27th February*, 1838.

"My dear Rev. Mother,

"If you think Almighty God would receive one so unworthy, I would be most willing to share the labours of the Australian Mission. I am aware of my deficiencies, and still more of my want of virtue, but I trust that if chosen by Him, He will prepare the instrument for his own work. He knows that I desire nothing but to fulfil His holy will. I have had this long time this good work at heart, and I often wished to accompany the wretched convicts on board to begin there what the state of insubordination at Newgate rendered so difficult. I would not presume to offer my poor services for this holy work but that 'the head cannot say to the feet I have no need of you.' As I believe that God enlightens superiors in what regards the particular as well as the general good of all, I expect to learn His holy will in this as well as in all other concerns through the medium of His representative.

"With great respect, I remain, my dear Rev. Mother,

"Your obedient child in Christ,

"Sister Mary John Cahill."

The others who offered were Sister M. Paul O'Reilly, Sister Francis de Sales O'Brien, Sister M. Laurence Cator, and Sister M. Xavier Williams. All were accepted unless Sister M. Paul, whose health it was thought would not enable her to bear the voyage. Sister M. Baptist de Lacy, who had entered expressly for the Australian Mission, and made her vows the previous year, of course joined the rest. Mrs. Aikenhead's letters of this date tell of toils and anxieties in connection with the exodus of this small band. She had then just sufficient strength to go about a little, and she spared herself neither trouble nor fatigue in making the necessary preparations for the expedition. With her usual generosity she provided the sisters with many things over and above what were strictly speaking required. She had a copy made for them of the Latin Constitutions at a cost of ten guineas; she gave copies of all the Retreats, Exhortations, and Spiritual papers of the congregation; furnished them with altar-linens, vestments, a well-chosen collection of books, and all requisites for opening a school after their landing; and took care that they should have everything that could contribute to their comfort and convenience, and afford them pleasing occupation on the voyage. No doubt many an aspiration was sent up to heaven as she directed and superintended the arrangements for the departure of those she regretted sending from her. But she believed their mission would be rich in the harvest of redeemed souls, and she counted no sacrifice too great to make in such a cause.

Before the sisters left the mother-house in Stanhope-street, the Rev. Mother gave them a special retreat and a course of instructions. Speaking confidentially the day before they left Ireland to a sister who had made the novitiate under her, she said: "It is when you

and the others are gone I shall have to feel your loss. May God bless you, my dear child. You were always willing to acknowledge your faults. Live according to the spirit of your holy rules, and thus deserve the crown of those who conquer by final perseverance. May this be your happy lot. May you ever remember that your engagements can only be fulfilled by a constant and generous exercise of self-denial. It is the crucified image of your heavenly Spouse which was presented to you as your model on the day you pronounced your vows." The mother sent her children on their way rejoicing, confiding them to the care of Dr. Ullathorne who was to travel with them, be their confessor, and as she well believed their sincere friend and prudent guide.

On the 18th of August, 1838, the five Sisters of Charity embarked at Gravesend on board a fine merchant vessel, "The Francis Spaight," bound for New South Wales. After a perilous voyage of four months the passengers, among whom were several priests and ecclesiastical students brought out by Dr. Ullathorne, arrived at Sydney on the 31st of December. A few days later they proceeded to Paramatta, the scene of their future labours, and at that time a penal settlement. The funds for the foundation had been provided beforehand in the way specified in the following extract from a letter addressed by Dr. Polding to the Archbishop of Dublin, and dated the 17th of January, 1840:—"In making my application, and in the whole course of the transactions, neither I nor the Vicar-General, Dr. Ullathorne, ever mentioned a thought of expecting support to be provided the sisters by their own institute. Dr. Ullathorne, by his own exertions, and by the charity of the friends of the mission, had means adequate for the support of the sisters before the application was made, and on the arrival of the community of five, I at once settled on them a support of £200 a year, while a charitable friend took upon himself to pay the rent of their residence, £50 per annum. I am at present in treaty for a house and lands for a novitiate, for which I am to pay the sum of £2,000, which Divine Providence will enable me to do."

As the history of this off-shoot from the parent stem does not properly belong to our memoir we shall only briefly review the nature of the work the Sisters of Charity found themselves engaged in, and give one or two local sketches which will perhaps sufficiently indicate what the picture would be if the outline were filled up. It must be remembered that New South Wales was at that time a penal colony. The name of Botany Bay was known and detested long before the fair land of which it was a part became the chosen home of the emigrant. The Church had indeed followed her poor children, as it is her wont to do in joy and sorrow, but the aids she received were few, and her efforts to contend against the utter degradation of convict life produced so little fruit, that the inmates of the female prison

at Paramatta were reckless and depraved to such a degree that a priest could not enter within the gates unless to administer the last sacraments to the dying. No convent had as yet been established in the country—certainly no community of an active Order. And here as in so many instances nearer home the Sisters of Charity were the pioneers of the chosen army of the Lord. Their coming was hailed with joy not only by the Catholic clergy and people, but also by the Protestant governor, Sir George Gipps, who received them as friends and the harbingers of a better state of things. Even the poor convicts, degraded though they were, had a welcome for the nuns, who soon, by the magic touch of sympathy, reached the soft spot which may be found in the heart of every child of Adam. Nor was it a painfully tedious work to develop the germ of good that lay hidden in these degraded natures. One of the sisters, looking back through the long vista of forty years to this period, said it would be difficult to describe the joy and gratitude of these poor souls as they welcomed the sisters to their abode. Eight hundred women and three hundred children were confined in the prison. Their occupation was breaking stones and sawing wood! The sisters saw at once that such labours tended rather to harden than to subdue the convicts; and after a few weeks they made a representation to the governor, who acceded most cordially to their suggestion that a public laundry should be opened and needlework taken in for their employment. In a few months' time a great reformation was exhibited. Three of the sisters visited the factory every day to prepare the poor women for the sacraments they had been strangers to so long. The good work progressed. In 1840, the governor was so pleased with the conduct of the prisoners that he gave them the privilege of receiving wages from the families to whom they were assigned.

Having the sanction of the Home Government the Sisters of Charity had no obstacles to encounter in visiting the gaols, hospitals, and schools; while, on the other hand, they were perfectly free and unembarrassed in the discharge of their duty, for they had declined the offer of £40 per annum each, which had been made to them as catechists by Government a few days before leaving England. They received all the kindness and co-operation they could desire from gentlemen in high official station. The Attorney-General, John Herbert Plunkett, an Irishman and a Catholic, proved a true friend in all their difficulties. The governor and Lady Gipps treated them with the greatest respect and courtesy, and forwarded the object of their mission most cordially. This worthy pair could not, however, understand why the nuns would not accept the hospitalities of Government House; they evidently thought that a quiet dinner-party could not possibly be considered an infringement on the strictest religious decorum.

An important charge was committed to the Sisters of Charity soon after their arrival in the colony, namely, the care of the children of the Catholic convicts who were under the protection of the Government. This alone would have been worth emigrating for. Other undertakings followed in course of time. It is a matter of surprise how, with the few sisters who formed the foundation and the small number who joined them (for vocations whether to the priesthood or to conventual life are very rare in Australia) so much was achieved. Assisted by the generosity of the people, they, within a few years, founded a hospital, a Magdalen Asylum, and schools, the care of which institutions, in addition to their other duties, must have filled to overflowing every moment of their time. But perhaps the dearest of all their duties was their ministration in the "condemned cell." The sole survivor[1] of the five emigrant sisters had in her old age no sweeter remembrance of her labours of charity, multiform as they were, than this; and she told of many a beautiful death glorified by faith, and hope, and holy love, and the humility of a contrite heart, which was the lot not seldom of those who left the condemned cell only to ascend the fatal platform.

The same sister related that one evening being about to return to the convent after having made all her sick-calls but one, she was tempted to take a short cut home by the Bush, which ran in towards that part of the town in which the convent was situated. She did so, and as she and the sister who accompanied her walked quickly along, for night was approaching, and there is little or no twilight at certain seasons in Sydney, they passed on their way a man of fine figure wearing a slouched hat, and having something peculiar in his appearance. Immediately they heard distinctly the traveller following closely step by step behind them. She bade the other sister give no sign of alarm; and at the same time with the natural intrepidity of her race (she was a Limerick lady of ancient family) turned fully round, and bowing to the man, said in a courteous manner, while the basket on her arm, and the cross on her breast gleaming in the last rays of the daylight, attested the truth of her words:—"We are Sisters of Charity." "Are you?" he replied, in a tone as respectful as her own and with an air that bespoke good breeding. "Yes," continued the sister; "we are going to visit the sick and have taken this way to shorten the distance. Can we be of any use to you?" "No," he answered, "not *now*," laying a strong emphasis on the last word.

A few weeks later, the city was thrown into a state of excitement on hearing of the arrest on a charge of murder of a young man, who turned out to be the wayfarer the sisters had encountered in the Bush.

[1] Sister Mary Baptist de Lacy, whose long and holy life closed at St. Mary Magdalen's, Donnybrook, on the 12th of December, 1878, while this memoir was passing through the press.

He was a fine young fellow, an Englishman of good education and respectable family, who had left home for the Australian gold mines, in the hope of returning a rich and happy man. Alas! his golden dreams had a tragic ending. Quarrelling, while under the influence of drink, with his partner about some money transaction, he drew forth his revolver and shot the man dead. On coming to himself he fled, and took refuge in the Bush. It was there while straying along a by-path he met the sisters, and was impelled by some unaccountable impulse to follow their steps. During his trial he excited the greatest interest. The fatal act was so manifestly unpremeditated, done as it was under the double influence of drink and passion; his acknowledgment of it was so frank; and his whole bearing was so straightforward, that the judge, Sir Roger Therry, used every effort to procure his acquittal. It was of no use, however; he was condemned. He looked his fate steadily in the face, and resolved that though he might lose this world he would not lose the next.

As a member of the Established Church he was visited daily by two Protestant clergymen. The execution was soon to take place, and he gave all his attention to the preparation for that awful hour. He thought that if there was power in the Church to forgive sins he should like to make a confession of those of his whole life and receive absolution from their guilt. He therefore questioned one of the clergymen on the subject, who answered: "Yes, there is power in the Church of England to forgive sins." When the other clergyman arrived next day, Francis G—— informed him that he was ready to make his confession. But to his astonishment he received for answer that there was no power in the Church of England to forgive sins! A question involving the eternal interests of a human soul was not to be trifled with, especially in the case of a man under sentence of death. Seeing there was no unity in the Church of his birth, he resolved on becoming a Catholic. He lost no time in placing himself under instruction, and was received into the Church, making his first Communion with a strong and lively faith. The Sisters of Charity came to visit him, and *now* did him the service which he had not required of them on the evening when he met them on the by-path through the Bush. They were greatly edified and touched by the fortitude he displayed to the last. Their visits seemed to give him great consolation, and they had it in their power to procure him little alleviations even of a temporal nature. He had a young wife, and life was still dear to him; but he told the sisters he preferred death to being sent to a penal settlement where he should be associated with the most depraved classes. His whole preparation for death was beautiful. He received confirmation from Dr. Davies, Bishop of Maitland; and, strong in faith, he met his fate assisted by all that religion can give her children. The sister who had first spoken to him in the Bush was his friend to the last.

When another of the poor condemned was within a few hours of undergoing the same awful penalty he said to this sister who had been his daily visitor in the cell: "Farewell, God bless you; and if I find mercy from my Redeemer, I will ask of Him as a favour that when your soul is about to be judged I may be there to plead for you!" She had indeed done much to comfort and instruct him. "If I had known as much of my religion twenty years ago," he said, some days before his death, "as I do now, I should not have to suffer an ignominious death." Like many another, the poor fellow had plunged into the busy life of the world with scanty knowledge of practical faith. He is believed to have been guiltless of the crime for which, upon circumstantial evidence, he was condemned to lose his life.

Colonial life has its pleasures as well as its anxieties, and the labourers in those distant vineyards find many a compensation in the midst of their strange, and at times isolated, sphere of work. If the priest in his long solitary rides through the Bush, finds no place of rest but the bare ground and no pillow but the saddle, and has his short repose occasionally disturbed by the rustling sound which signals the approach of the rattlesnake; and if the nuns when superintending the bathing of their troops of orphans, have to keep a sharp look-out lest the young sharks should take a bite of the little ones; still, these are only occasional and avertible dangers. As a set-off against unpleasant episodes, they have a delightful sensation of healthy life flowing through their veins, and enjoy all that freshness of spirits which a new country with its necessity for activity and energy, and its ever-changing circumstances, is sure to excite. The pure free air, the springy turf, the solitude in Nature's wilds which makes the pious mind more intimately realise the presence of God, are an absolute enjoyment to those who have left behind them the crush and worry and high-pressure strain of Old World life.

An Irish bishop, considered anything but robust in health, who went out some time since to Australia, declared that if he felt weak and indisposed in the morning, and got a sick-call that would take him fifty miles through the Bush, he would feel better and better every mile he travelled, from the purity and elasticity of the air, and a certain charm in those solitary expeditions through the untrodden woods in search of human souls needing his ministry. In making the visitation of his immense diocese he had often to depend on the hospitality of the settlers for his night's lodging. But hospitality is a virtue which is well practised in those remote regions, and quite irrespective of religious differences between host and guest. One evening a Presbyterian settler kindly asked the bishop to stay the night in his house. The traveller gratefully accepted the invitation, and on the following morning inquired if there were any of his flock in that part of the country. The gentleman said he had heard there

was a Catholic, a German, very ill many miles off, and no doubt the sick man would be glad of his ministry; and at the same time he offered to send one of his retainers to show the bishop the way.

His lordship immediately got ready. He rode a good horse, but was not so well mounted as his guide, to whom he said: "You can ride on a bit, and I shall overtake you." The man glanced somewhat contemptuously at the bishop's horse—as much as to say: "Do you fancy you could overtake me with that animal?" He set off, however, and after a little the bishop followed. When the latter had ridden five or six miles without coming in sight of his guide, he began to understand the meaning of the man's look; by-and-by he felt convinced he should not overtake him; and in the end he made up his mind to do without him, and to pursue the direction he had received, with the sun alone for his guide through the uninhabited tracts: his dog, an indispensable companion on such occasions, and always a trusty friend, accompanying the horse and rider. They had already gone a long distance—dog, horse, and master—when the former caught sight of an emu and forthwith gave her chase. It would have been out of the question, under any circumstances, for the traveller to desert his faithful four-footed friend—so on they all went—the dog flying at the emu's throat, and the bishop getting into the spirit of the chase as the wild hunt dashed on.

When at length the dog was whistled back, the traveller found he had lost his way irretrievably. Sending up a prayer to heaven he threw the reins on the horse's neck and let the animal take his way. The creature's instinct came to the assistance of the party, and presently he was found picking his steps through some underwood where there was a faint indication of a path which the rider had not observed. Once on the track the bishop felt sure that he should soon have some evidence of the presence of human life; and in fact not very long after he came on a solitary cottage, in which, however, there was no living thing visible. Dismounting, and looking about for some sign to stimulate his hope, he espied a newly-washed shirt hanging up to dry in a little paddock behind the tenement. This was great encouragement; he looked at the article with peculiar interest; set about examining it closely; and to his no small satisfaction discovered legibly marked on it the good Irish name of O'C——. In much better spirits he mounted again and set off in search of his countryman.

On he went, and still no sign of life, until, having reached the brow of a hill, he saw in a plain stretched out beneath him, a flock of sheep peacefully grazing. This was the next best thing to O'C—— himself, and he proceeded in his search for the owner of the shirt and the sheep. Suddenly he became conscious of the presence of a man with a gun on his shoulder, standing under a tree, and with lowering

brow gazing suspiciously at him. Going up to the stranger, he addressed him as O'C——, without however inducing him thereby to unbend. "I think I know some friends of yours," the bishop then added, mentioning the name of a priest in Ireland. An expression of joy and interest came over the man's face. "I have often wished and longed," he said, "to hear something of my relatives, but never could get any information about them." He then told how he had gone out to Australia a poor boy of ten years of age. His parents were Irish, and had settled in England and died there. His only remembrance of religion in connection with family ties, was the incident of being on one occasion taken by a sister to a Catholic church. This was all he remembered of religious observance, and he yearned for more.

As the conversation proceeded, the bishop became convinced that he had personally known members of the settler's family including two highly respected priests, and he related circumstances connected with them. The poor fellow was greatly comforted and quite softened, and frankly told his own history since he came to the colony. Thereupon the bishop, sitting down on the trunk of a tree which lay beside them, instructed him in the Christian religion, heard the confession of his whole life, and then and there, under the blue vault of heaven, and as a true shepherd of souls, raised his absolving hand, and in the name of his Lord and Master forgave the sinner. The pastor felt that he had been sent thither by the great Father for that purpose, and it was indeed a solemn moment for the two men so strangely brought together.

When all was done, and it was time to think of the first object of the journey—the sick German, O'C—— gave the bishop the best indication he could of the direction in which the foreigner's settlement might be found. "But you must want refreshment, sir," he then added. "As you go back you will pass the cottage; and if you put your hand into a hole in the wall near the door, you will find the key. Go in and you will get something in the cupboard." No sooner was the matter mentioned when the bishop discovered that he really was hungry. He gladly accepted the invitation, and on obeying the directions, found a cold turkey and some very good bread, butter, and cheese, which, with a drink of milk, or perhaps a cup of the tea that always stands ready on an Australian hob, supplied a sumptuous repast, while the dog beside him got a share, and the horse with his head half in at the door was not left an idle spectator of the scene.

All three refreshed, the party set out again in search of the sick German, and after a long journey found his house. But here there was no welcome. The patient said he was not a Catholic, and did not want a priest; the wife was very uncivil; the daughter alone showed some sign of respect and attention to the visitor. The bishop

took his departure, feeling that he had met in O'C—— the man to whom he was really sent, and that he had done all that he could for him. Late in the evening he reached his halting-place, whence scouts had been sent out in search of him. As serious alarm had been felt on account of his prolonged absence, so was there great rejoicing when he made his appearance. All those kind and hospitable feelings were exhibited which give so great a charm to the simple life of the forest and the plain.

But we have fairly lost ourselves in the Australian wilds, and must now return to the British Isles.

About the time that the Australian Mission was first spoken of, Mrs. Aikenhead was asked to send a branch of her congregation to the town of Preston, in Lancashire. The negotiations and preparations for this extension occupied a longer time than the arrangements for the more distant expedition, and it was not until 1840 that the house was built, and all things were in readiness for the arrival of the sisters. A great desire had been evinced on the part of those who had been the prime movers in the project for bringing them to Preston to have a suitable convent built for their residence; but by some unaccountable misunderstanding nothing could be worse than the accommodation afforded. The house was miserably small, and there was no garden attached to it. There was no room that could be appropriated as an oratory; so that the Blessed Sacrament had to be deposited in a kind of sanctuary which was divided from the schools by folding-doors, and in which Mass was occasionally celebrated for the school children.

The sisters took possession of the house in 1840, and during eight years laboured indefatigably in their arduous employments. The schools were immense, being at the very least double the size of those attached to the convents in Ireland; the visiting mission was large and unusually fatiguing; and the toils of the night-school were not over until half-past nine o'clock. It was a great work; but the workers did not receive the helps they needed. A larger number was required than it was at first supposed, and funds for their support were not forthcoming. Mrs. Aikenhead added a yearly allowance, lest, as she said, "Our dear ones should suffer from real pecuniary want with all their weighty works." But even this, according as it became necessary to increase the community, did not suffice. The priests proposed the opening of a pay school for the more respectable children of the town, with a view to adding to the funds. Mrs. Aikenhead would not consent to this project, until it was represented to her that as there was no provision in Preston for the education of the class referred to, she should mar God's glory by refusing. On this she yielded, and the pay school was opened, but she soon saw her error, and the scheme was given up. Indeed in justice to the community it could not be

continued; for there were not sisters enough to carry it on without detriment to the duties properly belonging to the institute, whose peculiar object is the service of the poor. Thus in straitened circumstances, amidst many difficulties, and carrying on great labours, the sisters toiled on year after year, Mrs. Aikenhead all the while suffering much anxiety on their account, and often tempted to recall them. The health of some gave way completely; three died, though not on the scene of their labours, yet in consequence of overwork on that mission; and at length it became clear to the Rev. Mother that she should resign Preston. Finally, she did so in the month of October, 1848, when the sisters were recalled to Dublin.

The labours of the Sisters of Charity, however, had not been in vain. The religious aspect of the town was much improved, and a good impression was made especially on the minds of the young women and children. To this day the fruits of their exertions are apparent, and that part of the town which fell more particularly under their influence is distinguished for the high character of its women. The name of the Sisters of Charity is held in veneration there. Preston is not without a religious order to watch over the youth of the town. After an interval of a few years, the Faithful Companions succeeded the Sisters of Charity. Their schools for the education of the better classes, which is the object of their institute, place them above the difficulties which an insufficient foundation gives rise to. They have three convents in the town, and it is a consolation to those who preceded them that they have been called there to labour under happier circumstances for the same good cause.

Not long after the Sisters of Charity went to Preston they received a visit from Father Kenny, who, being on his last journey to Rome, passed through the town and went one evening to spend a few hours with the sisters, give them news of Ireland, and bid them good-bye. Though Father Kenny had not of late years been so much concerned as of old in the affairs of the congregation, he was always one of Mrs. Aikenhead's most valued friends. Whenever she was in trouble or doubt or difficulty he was ready to help her. His advice was invaluable, for it was that of a wise, experienced, learned man. He was of a reserved character, and seldom spoke warmly, though in society his manners were agreeable and courteous, and his conversation was so full of information that it was an intellectual pleasure to listen to him. He kept people at a distance, and while all should respect, some feared him. The superioress at Preston remarked that on the occasion of his farewell visit he departed from his usual reserve in speaking of the Sisters of Charity, "his beloved friends," as he called them, and especially of Mrs. Aikenhead, whose greatness of character and whose noble work he highly extolled.

Worn out with excessive labour and grievously afflicted with

asthma, Father Kenny continued his journey to Rome—the only spot, said Archbishop Murray, worthy to be his death-place. On the 19th of November, 1841, he breathed his last, and a few days later he was laid to rest in the Church of the Gesu.

While affairs were still in a very uncertain state at Preston, Mrs. Aikenhead was gladdened by the accounts constantly transmitted to her, of the preparations which were being made in the west of Ireland for the ninth foundation of the congregation. The circumstances connected with the building and endowment of the new convent were peculiar and highly gratifying. The house was founded at Clarinbridge, in the county of Galway, by Mrs. Redington of Kilcornan, with an endowment for five sisters. To it are attached twelve acres of land, the gift of her son Mr. (afterwards Sir Thomas) Redington. No expense was spared in providing all that was necessary for the sisters, and requisite for the work they were to be engaged in. The convent chapel was finished with the greatest care and taste. The altar and the tabernacle are of the most costly marbles. An exquisite, delicately-carved group in white marble, by the sculptor Hogan, representing the Ascension of our Lord, surmounts the tabernacle. The altar and tabernacle cost £700. Over the altar hangs a good copy, richly framed, of Raphael's Transfiguration. The chalice is a work of high art, and was consecrated by Pope Gregory XVI.; the cup alone, which is of pure gold, is worth £105. Equally beautiful is the remonstrance in emblematic design: a figure of religion holds with both hands above her head the circle with rays in which the Sacred Host is placed; she stands on a globe, and this again is supported by a gracefully-curved pedestal, on which three little angels are seated, one holding the cross, another the crown of thorns, and the third the pillar. Besides these costly gifts Mrs. Redington gave the sisters very precious reliquaries.

On the 24th of June, 1844, Mrs. MacCarthy and two of the sisters went as guests to Kilcornan House, where they remained to oversee the final preparations at the convent. On the 12th of July three other sisters arrived, and later on came another, with two lay sisters. The altar was consecrated and the Blessed Sacrament deposited in the tabernacle on the 16th, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, when the nuns took possession of their new dwelling, the convent of Our Lady of Mercy. Before the end of the month two schools were opened. The number of applicants considerably exceeded the limits of the accommodation provided, and a selection had to be made. Among the pupils first received were many grown girls, young women in fact, who had not yet made their first Communion. The mothers seeing the elder girls preferred, without knowing the reason, concluded that the older the children were the greater chance they had of being admitted, and it was amusing to see how rapidly some of the young folk grew up, and what mistakes the parents had to correct. Children

presented the first day as about nine or ten years of age, were introduced the next day as more than eleven or twelve, and so on; no stratagem being considered inadmissible if only the young generation could be brought within the influence of the nuns, who were as new and as welcome to the simple country-folk as if they had dropped down from heaven into their midst. The daily attendance at the school was about two hundred, while eighty or ninety came to a Sunday-school which was opened soon afterwards for adults and children.

A mission was opened for teaching the catechism on Sundays in the parish chapel, at Roveagh, a village about four miles distant from the convent by the high-road, but brought very much nearer by a path through the Kilcornan demesne. The visits to the sick-poor were at once commenced. As the convent was founded by the Redington family, and with a special view to the advantage of the tenantry of their estate, the sisters, of course, made this class the special object of their care. However, as there was no convent nearer than Galway, which is about eight miles distant, the spiritual and corporal necessities of the poor outside the Kilcornan property were so pressing that the Clarinbridge community were solicited to extend their visits, and before very long they took a circuit of several miles round the convent. When Mrs. Redington was at home they were sometimes accommodated with a car. Generally they crossed the country on foot. But though the journeys might be longer than those they had to make in cities, the visitation was probably not so severe a labour: the fresh air and the open fields were beneficial to health and spirits.

In course of time the founder's daughter-in-law, Lady Redington, established a sewing school at the convent, and arranged to have the plain work and the knitting executed by the girls, disposed of at a depôt for Irish work in London. Later, the same zealous friend of the poor had the children taught lace-work, and thereby greatly helped a number of industrious families. Thus Mrs. Redington procured by her foundation the blessings of religious instruction, school education, and help in sickness and other trials, not only for her own tenantry but for innumerable other poor people, who, but for her, would have remained ignorant and destitute. The spiritual benefits resulting to the people of the neighbourhood were remarkable in many ways. The number of communicants on Sundays greatly increased; more than four hundred members were enrolled in the Living Rosary Sodality; and the dying were so consoled and helped in their last moments that the saying went abroad, that "people die now in a way that they never died before!" Mrs. Aikenhead appointed as rectress of the convent at Clarinbridge a beloved and trusted member of the congregation—Sister Mary Baptist Griffin—gentle Gerald's fondly-cherished sister.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A CHAPTER OF TROUBLES.

IN the foregoing history of the foundation and early years of the congregation we have not dwelt much on the difficulties and trials which beset Mrs. Aikenhead at almost every turn. Undoubtedly she had to meet some disappointments, to put up with some defeats, and to mourn over the loss by death of dear and valued members of her community. Such things are inevitable, and indeed can well be borne. Mrs. Aikenhead had a magnanimous spirit, and an unconquerable power of labour and endurance; and from the very first she understood fully that it would be no easy matter to organise and set in good working order an institute wholly untried in these countries, and depending for its success, under heaven, not only on public sympathy and support, but on very high and special qualities in those who should undertake to be her fellow-labourers. She was not surprised when monetary resources fell short; when friends on whose countenance she relied proved obstructive rather than helpful; when some hitch in public or private affairs produced a distressing complication in her work. And surely, when God called her children, and death gathered them as first-fruits for the Lord Almighty's altar, she was ready to give them, though with tears. Beautiful deaths give forth a radiance which enlightens and consoles those who have still a long stretch of the thorny path to follow, and whose vivid faith and sympathetic love recognise sweet influences at work, and perceive new blessings falling on them, through the agency of beloved friends taken up to heavenly places. Therefore death in the ranks of those who labour for God is not utter separation; nor is it a cross of the first magnitude.

But there is a cross which even the holiest shrink from, and which while it deeply wounds their human hearts seems to imperil God's glory, by endangering the stability of the work undertaken for Him and manifestly blessed by His approval. Such a cross has come to saints, and Mary Aikenhead was destined to endure the severity of its pressure. Twice in her life the solid ground trembled beneath her feet, and the structure she had raised with so much labour was shaken to its foundation. Those troubles are long since at rest; the prime movers have passed away; it were an ungrateful task to reopen the wounds, and reveal the faults which man has forgotten, and God, it is

hoped, forgiven. Suffice it to say that the congregation passed through a fiery ordeal when strong efforts were made, both within the congregation and outside of it, to change in the first instance its constitutions, and in the second instance the nature of its work.

In the former case the danger was, perhaps, less imminent, and the excuse for those in opposition was greater: for at the time when the spirit of resistance first manifested itself the constitutions had not been confirmed by the Holy See. Those who most opposed these constitutions were under the impression that the ordinances would prove too strict, and try too severely the virtue of those who should be called upon to observe them; and therefore like Brother Elias at the time that St. Francis of Assisium was writing the Rule of his Order, they endeavoured to form a party among the religious to oppose those ordinances and resist the founder. It was an hour of peril and of pain when these questions were agitated. A great cause was at stake. The opposition came from those who naturally should have been the first to offer support. But the crisis passed and the cause was secured: yet not without loss. Some beloved friends drew aside and stood aloof for ever. One member of the congregation passed into another Order. Not without wound upon wound to her heart did the mother witness these defections: standing firm in support of the right, and resolutely enduring censure and misrepresentation.

In the second case what was aimed at was to bring about a change in the essential object of the institute as it regarded the poor, and to withdraw the sisters from the lowly services they rendered them, to others seemingly more intellectual. Mrs. Aikenhead was one of the last women in the world who would be likely to disregard the duty of cultivating the intellect; and as a matter of fact that duty was far from being left out in the plan and scope of the congregational labours. But, devotion to purely intellectual pursuits, no matter how beneficial the result might promise to be either to religion or to the institute, was quite out of the question at that stage in the history of the Irish Sisters of Charity. They were vowed to the service of the poor, and the demands on them in this ministration were simply overpowering. Compassion for the poor, and tender interest in her own long-suffering people, seem to have been born with Mary Aikenhead and to have grown with her growth. To comfort them in their sorrows, to relieve them in their distress, to cheer them on in their difficult way, and to help them to reach the home of the children of God: these were the objects of her holy ambition, these she thought worthy of any sacrifice. It may well be imagined how she would resist any attempt to draw into a narrower circle the services which her congregation rendered to the poor.

There was one branch of charitable work, which, as we have seen, was particularly dear to Mrs. Aikenhead: the care, namely, of the

sick in hospitals. It gratified her expansive heart to get possession of the poor sufferers whose refuge these institutions are, and to do for them all that charity can dictate. She did not think she had done her best until she had a hospital under her own immediate care, and until she saw the sisters surrounded like their divine Master by the diseased forms of suffering humanity, brought to them for pity and for healing through His help. She worked hard, and without the amount of sympathy from outside which she had expected, to establish such an institution in Dublin. She succeeded; but only to find that the indifference of outsiders was a small evil when compared with the passive resistance of more than one of her own children, in whose eyes the work at St. Vincent's was an aggravated type of the species of labour which they deemed unfitted for refined and educated women. The project had in fact been regarded as a fond fancy of Mrs. Aikenhead, which never would be, and never ought to be, realised. Though it was seen that she worked on steadily towards the attainment of her object, and that she sent sisters to Paris to study the management of hospitals and the general treatment of the sick, the project seemed still chimerical. But when at length all difficulties were overcome, and St. Vincent's hospital was in actual operation, these unsubmissive spirits were only confirmed in their opposition to the principle of which it was the outcome.

It is true that this opposition was given by very few; but great endeavours were made to bring the members of the congregation to the same sentiments, and especially to infuse a spirit of resistance into the minds of the younger sisters and the novices. To their honour be it said, they, with very few exceptions, threw back the disloyal suggestion. Some were too innocent and unsuspicious to understand its drift, and went straight to the foundress for an explanation. It shocked the sense of honour, obedience, and charity, in others. But when Mrs. Aikenhead found, to her astonishment, that insidious mischief had been at work in her congregation, she could not for a time ascertain the extent to which the baneful influence might have infected the community, and she was thrown into a state of the most painful embarrassment. She knew nothing for certain but the imminence of the danger. Indecision and want of courage were not weaknesses of her nature. She clearly saw what it was her duty to do, she put forth all her strength, and saved her congregation from a fatal injury. The anguish of mind which she went through at this crisis was indescribable. But grace to endure and to stand firm was not wanting, and she had all through the support of her ever ready friend, true father and wise counsellor, Archbishop Murray.

The loss, however, was greater in this last instance than on the occasion previously referred to. The efforts which had been used to awaken the spirit of undutifulness, and the misrepresentations which

had been made in reference to the Head Superior's government, so disturbed the minds of some of the congregation, that now one, and now another, and again a third, withdrew to take the habit of other Orders or to return to their family.

This season of bitterness and storm resulted in good. The tenacious clinging of her children to the great mother, and their devoted love for the congregation, were marked in the strongest manner during the years that intervened between that painful period and the death of the foundress. Attachment to the superior, and loyalty to the institute became thenceforth a characteristic of the congregation.

It may strike one as surprising that Mrs. Aikenhead, who was naturally so clear-headed and so true in judgment, should ever have admitted into her congregation persons who were capable of creating such disturbance. But Mrs. Aikenhead, with all her quickness, was not suspicious. She could be deceived like other people; and it was only when her attention was aroused, and when her observation was strongly directed to the investigation of a character that her acuteness and her penetration were so unerring. Though she was universally pronounced "an amazingly clever woman," no one could say that she had not a simple, honest heart. She was generous, too, and not unwilling to give her neighbour the benefit of a doubt.

But unquestionably the sad experience of this time helped to sharpen Mrs. Aikenhead's natural acuteness into something like preternatural insight. In later years it was well understood that people need not try to deceive her; for she would read them through on the spot. It was said of her that she could "rip up the truth with a look." Her discernment of character is constantly shown in her correspondence, especially when she is obliged to give directions to a superior regarding the management of new subjects placed under her jurisdiction. "One word for all," she writes on a certain occasion, "beware of over-smooth, quiet folk. Those who fall into many faults either from ardent temperament, or even a certain degree of levity and vanity have a good experience of humiliation, and with openness of heart will improve and be useful." And here is a summary of character worthy of some of our masters in the art of analysis. Writing to the superior of a young sister (or novice) who had lately been transferred to her house, Mrs. Aikenhead says:—

"Talent of a useful kind she has, but we must try to plough up the ground somehow. True humility she has never evinced, and she is quite deficient in self-knowledge. Pray; and teach her as much as you can. I fear there is a want in her brain, and unless our Lord is pleased to grant abundant grace, I should fear our never being able to make use of the talent. Do, my dear child, teach her to take her heart asunder, and to look into the folds of it. She certainly thinks herself of more importance than anyone without solid virtue can ever be in a community. That confidence which utter ignorance gives to certain characters is really astonishing. We

often observe that she is one never apt to ask a question, and never to see her own defects; but she has one blessing, *good temper*. However, this is often an accompaniment of bold, undaunted characters. Don't be disedified. I really speak as I would of the maladies of her body to the physician. She is one who would really be the better of a real humiliation caused by her own actual fault."

The sister whose character was thus analysed took the training well, and in the end became a valuable member of the congregation. Speaking of another sort of disposition, Mrs. Aikenhead says:— "M—— has not much quickness, but if she turn her mind to zeal, and does not allow her own body and its ailments to occupy the powers of her soul—I mean the memory and the will—she has a vivacity of intellect which will help her. Indeed the less we indulge our poor imaginations on points entirely selfish either relating to soul or body, the holier and happier we shall be. And I do believe the arch-enemy is ever trying to keep us occupied with self in some shape or other, well knowing, the cunning wretch, that whilst he can keep us in such occupation of mind, he succeeds in forming an obstacle to all sanctity."

Still, though she could so well discern the faults and weaknesses of a character, Mrs. Aikenhead was far from expecting perfection in what she was fond of calling "our poor, weak human nature." In reference to a young member of the congregation she says: "I can answer that her health has been excellent; *temper* ditto. Indeed we never had any actual fault to require correction in either. I said actual; I mean no fault which could be considered a grave one. As to absolute perfection where can such be found? Nor ought we to expect it."

With regard to the difficulties which constantly arose from the injudicious zeal of friends, as well as from the mistakes and misrepresentations of hostile critics, we might preserve silence were it not that Mrs. Aikenhead's way of meeting these difficulties was characteristic, while the rules which she laid down for the guidance of her community under trying circumstances show what were her principles of action and of government. At a moment when the superior of one of the houses had become an object of great blame and misrepresentation, Mrs. Aikenhead writes to her: "Say nothing, however, to any one. Let them go on as they like. I have ever found that a well-timed silence in the midst of a bustle prepares the way for a well-timed word of explanation, which from those who say nothing but what is truthful, will be more effectual than any altercation when feelings are excited." A heavy cloud rested a while over one of her communities on account of the non-acceptance of a branch of charitable work, which Mrs. Aikenhead conscientiously thought the sisters were not numerous enough to undertake. Her comments on the situation are as follows:—

"I am glad your little mistake about the reporter of prejudice (indeed I may say calumny) against the congregation has been set right; for my own part, I should regret that Mr. —— had been the person, but from the very first I did not think he was. But let all go on—at least let us try to keep our peace. Faith forbids us to repine at the ill-will or evil reports of anyone. Let us always remember that these and all the train of jealousy, envy, misrepresentation, are portions of the livery of Christ our Lord, and that the less we shrink from the share appointed to us to bear, so much the more pleasing shall we become in His sight, who came on earth to teach us the true virtues we should practise. . . . . Calumnies are now received as truth, and, depend upon it, every effort we make to contradict will only injure our cause. We cannot assert truth without proving others to have uttered the contrary, and this to no other purpose, for the present, at least, than to excite new misstatements. Time and steady perseverance in our duties will deserve the blessings of Divine Providence, and truth will triumph in the end. . . . . Meanwhile I wish you all to reflect that in no other virtue may *we* be more easily deluded than in that of zeal. We must ever keep justice and prudence in view on occasions when new foundations are proposed. And assuredly *justice* requires that the charities already committed to our care be properly attended to. This could not be done under our present number; and even I may truly say that there is by far too much work for the members capable of employment, if we consider strict justice to our sisters' health. If you had a school, a house of refuge, or an asylum added to the outdoor work of your house, you would feel the full force of what I say."

Mrs. Aikenhead was anxious that her different communities should be kept in full work, and have no opportunity of getting into those "creep-about-ways" which she considered destructive of the spirit which should animate Sisters of Charity. But there was a limit beyond which she would not go. If a community were severely tried by an exceptional pressure of their own proper work, it could not be helped. Speaking of one convent she says the state of things there is overwhelming; and in another community, she says, five sisters are doing the work of eight. But for no reason would she undertake a new branch of charity until she had heads and hands to work it efficiently; nor would she make a new foundation unless sufficient means were forthcoming for the support of her nuns. Yet sometimes she was tempted on this score. In a letter written in February, 1843, she speaks of having been asked one morning to take charge of three public establishments. She was badly off for members at that time, and she says: "All our friends (and they are not numerous) say we have too much already on heads and hands—and so it seems. But the priest to whom I allude, said to day: 'Who in Ireland, nay, who in the Christian Church at this moment, may not say the same! Zeal is worked even beyond what seems prudent everywhere.' And so it really seems. Again, pray. I scarcely know what to think until I can ascertain the opinions and wishes of his Grace." The archbishop must have been against the step, or at least not for it. The institutions were not undertaken.

People, it would appear, entertained at times a vague idea that Mrs. Aikenhead was not pushing on her institute with sufficient rapidity. They would have had her less cautious and more speculative; and would have been glad to see her send out colonies, even on invitations which did not by any means propose to insure a new community from pecuniary difficulties, or absolute want. Those speculative friends who asked everything, and undertook to provide nothing but work, seemed to think that the Rev. Mother could equip and endow a community, at a time when it was as much as she could do to make the two ends meet at head-quarters. On the subject of foundations she wrote as follows to the superior of one of her houses:—

"I must now refer you to our holy institute where mention is made of foundations. A house with proper title-deeds, rent free and furnished, or an equivalent, besides maintenance for four members, is considered a foundation; except where all this exists, our present circumstances will not admit of our even thinking of forming a community. You are fully aware that such was the settlement required by us in the very commencement, and you are fully aware how much experience has taught us since, regarding the wisdom of attending to the very letter of our statutes of government. If the point of having a convent in —— were even of urgent necessity in regard of health, most truly we have not means to purchase that advantage at such a rate as founding the convent, and supporting the members necessary for the functions of our holy institute in favour of the sick and ignorant poor members of Christ our Lord. The only terms on which we could even take the measure into consideration, once the permission of the bishop of the diocese has been granted, are those on which we have ever accepted a foundation; namely, a house secured by a proper title, and furnished, plainly of course. I think a sum of two hundred pounds may cover this outfit—with a certain and well-secured income of one hundred pounds per annum. Could this be promised, we, as you know, are ever willing to supply as many sisters as we find necessary to exercise the prominent functions of our Order; namely, visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant, and, if school-houses be provided, conducting poor schools. Now, most truly, *we* cannot offer any other terms. So may our heavenly Father direct all to his own greater glory and the good of souls. As to our not having *calls* for foundations, it is an error; we are already under promise of supplying two in England, and three in Ireland. Of one of these, all the buildings, etc., etc., will be ready in January; for one more we have the maintenance of novices, and have had for some time past; and in all ample maintenance for four, five, and eight religious sisters. We cannot, by our statutes, go anywhere on uncertainty; and the proposition of withdrawing at the end of a year, we could not at all enter into. We cannot go as *adventurers;* and truly I could give some items of the consequences of such proceedings, as would deter authorities from encouraging such. We have all our duties clearly defined and established by the Holy See, and must act in conformity."

It can hardly be a matter of surprise that while an institute of an "active Order" was still a novelty in the land, its superior should be asked to do things which, though contrary to the spirit and letter of the rules, should be regarded by the public as quite justifiable and

expedient. For instance, a young lady is anxious to enter the noviceship, but her family will not give their consent unless there is a promise given that when professed she shall be sent to a particular locality, or engaged in a special work. Mrs. Aikenhead might incur the loss of a good subject and a considerable fortune by her refusal to enter into such an agreement, but she was inexorable. "I *never* will admit any person to profession, she says, for a particular place. If ever that be done (no superior could do it with a safe conscience) we may date the upset of the congregation. If £3,000 a year, or £10,000 were the fortune, a point of this kind which includes the destruction of *obedience* and *dependence* must never be conceded."

And while Mrs. Aikenhead was blamed for not yielding a point occasionally, in favour of an aspirant with some thousands that would greatly have helped a struggling institute, she was censured still more severely in some quarters for not making Sisters of Charity out of material which had proved unsuitable, after the customary trial in the noviceship. The following, from one of her letters, bears upon this subject. Having spoken of the likelihood of one of the novices not coming to profession, she thus continues :—

"I have said so much, not to leave you in the way of fearing that I would think of parting with her or anyone else without solid reasons. I know it is the fashion to *say* that this great fault exists in regard to my government, and I have often dreaded (not, most conscientiously I can assert, from any undue love of my own reputation), that your little flock, or at least as many as are in the way of hearing observations, may be in the way of serious temptations—I mean such as would disturb sentiments of obedience—by hearing frequent disapprobation from persons of good sense and piety, who, though worthy and excellent, are still not absolutely competent to judge, in regard of want of personal knowledge of our particular *Directory regulations;* and who also, besides having the same defect as to actual knowledge of the goings on of the individuals, are, perhaps, naturally prejudiced from their own interest or that of esteemed friends, in the young persons concerned. I have, my dear M——, observed that you are liable to be alarmed as to what the people around you will say; and I am aware from other sources, that you are, or at least frequently have been, tried by this sort of *freedom* of fault-finding. We must not shrink from duty, for fear of any remark. And believe me that whilst I say this, I know it to be an equal duty to use every means and make every sacrifice, *consistent with duty*, to prevent such animadversions. We cannot escape from blame; but assuredly the representations of anyone leaving a convent ought not to be credited, whilst by far a greater proportion of young persons persevere in pious and animating love for the institute in all its works and labours, and an edifying respect, if not love, for its superiors. I believe N. N. will make every effort, for she loves the congregation; but if a return of almost insane obstinacy should appear, I think you would not wish her to be retained. What I suffered last winter would certainly be against wishing any other member of the family to join us, at least until we could be assured of consistency and continued exertion to amend where in her power, on the part of N. N. Now, my dear M——, let me entreat you not to allow any tease

of mind to injure you. Be assured of it, I am not even tempted to any undue feeling, nor do I blame you, even if you cannot say that you *do not* blame me. My sole desire is that all and each of us may be what our heavenly Spouse *wishes* us each to be; and so we will with God's help."

As for difficulties, the Rev. Mother expected to meet the cross at every turn, and in the most unlooked-for shape: and, truth to say, she was seldom disappointed. "Be assured," she says, "that very great truly (if poor weak nature alone were calculated), and even overwhelming difficulties have attended every change, improvement, or expenditure, by which our charitable institutions in Dublin have arrived at their present state, and the same I can truly aver of our various convents." On one occasion after having been for a long time thwarted, disappointed, and opposed by a powerful outsider in the execution of a matter of great consequence, things brightened a little. Still, she prepared herself and those engaged with her for the cross. "I have experienced enough," she says, "to expect schemes and twists which even, perhaps, may lead me to *stare* more than ever I have done; but, my dear mother, let us remember the thorny crown worn by our Lord Jesus, and the accumulated load of the Cross, as well as of sins (our own adding to the burden) with which the eternal lover of souls ascended to Calvary to secure our right to follow after even to the heaven of His glory; and let us try to return love for love by willingly suffering for the salvation of His creatures. Poor ——— will yet be a bright gem in the crown which we Sisters of Charity will present to our Immaculate Mother." And, again, the pressing nature of the difficulties that beset her on every side is thus referred to :—

"Dearest, I said it was literally 'live horse and you shall have oats'—and so it is, at least as far as regards Mr. ——'s mortgage. This, my dear, will render it next to impossible for me to be able to ensure even £200 per annum for the maintenance of your house; but you may rest assured that I will try to *share* every pound we have with you—proportionally at least. I expected that Mrs. —— would have promised something, but *no such thing*. Indeed she spoke as if she expected me to thank her for what she had given to the poor—but I was sadly silent. Only that we must confide in the miraculous Providence of the Almighty Father, I own to you I should 'faint in the way,' from the difficulties that surround us: but we must try our best to stand steadily under the heat and burden of the day, and with perseverance labour in our special engagements in the service of the poor. The £10 is a small sum in your circumstances, but were you to know how great a relief I have often experienced in gathering up £1 during my career, you would not be surprised that I felt really grateful in having that sum to give you. By degrees, and whenever I can lay by a pound from stronger calls—as I grieve to tell you such often occur whilst I really know not where to turn—your wants shall never be out of my mind. In all the real difficulties which increase, and very seriously embarrass me, I do assure you sources of relief have sprung up unexpectedly; and I feel in real truth that a very miraculous

interposition of divine Providence is granted to us. So we should be very culpable to cease for a moment to exercise a lively faith and entire conformity. Let us be faithful in those points. Amen."

This perfect conformity, this loving trust, and this grateful remembrance of past blessings are constantly inculcated in the Rev. Mother's instructions to her children :—

"A Sister of Charity," she writes, "would be very faulty who should refuse to cast all her solicitude upon that Almighty Providence of whose miraculous power *we* have had during the last thirty years such constant and wonderful proofs. Truly, my dear child, when I look back my very heart overflows; and yet, dear M. B., all was in the true path of holy Cross, our heavenly Spouse all the time bearing his standard on high, with many hard rocks, and prickly thorns, I may say the whole way along the narrow path; winds and waves dashing and blowing betimes; and very nasty reptiles. All is true. My dear child and sister, I tell you [this] to give you courage; for we are planted, like St. Peter, on the true rock, and we may hope that the foundation is deeply struck."

But, while preparing for the cross with a ready mind, and bearing it onward with true courage, she would not have anyone indifferent to the alleviations which Providence so often grants to the followers of the suffering Lord. No, a grateful heart should accept, and enjoy and be thankful for, the temporal blessings scattered even on the thorny path.

"Be grateful," she says, "for even temporal consolations, and fear not to enjoy these when sent by His own sweet Providence. We pray, and that by holy obedience, daily to be 'comforted and preserved in His holy service;' therefore to do so, and to enjoy the consolations which it shall please Him to comfort us with, is not at all incompatible with progress towards 'loving what Christ our Lord loved and embraced.' May each and all of us try to attain this! Our crosses are all trifles in comparison to the love which redeemed us on Calvary; but when to our weakness they appear weighty, our conformity is accepted by Omnipotence, as was the mite put by the poor widow into the treasury."

We have already seen how the watchful mother warned her children to beware of false zeal—that headlong impulse disguised as devotion to the cause of God's glory: a subtle spirit likely enough to be a danger in the path of Sisters of Charity. We shall now see how vigilant she was on another point, and how she dreaded the faintest indication of a jealous feeling excited by the success of other institutes or some preference which might be shown to a religious congregation which was not their own. The institute of the Sisters of Mercy, which was formed into a religious congregation about the time when Mrs. Aikenhead and her communities had been for fifteen years engaged in active work, was regarded by certain friends of the latter with anything but favour. A good deal of idle and mischievous

gossip was indulged in; the two institutes became the subject of comparison and contrast; and a rivalry which never was contemplated by the admirable women who were at the head of these congregations, was well nigh established by injudicious partisans in the outside ranks. Mrs. Aikenhead knew very well that it would be impossible to prevent the echo of this worse than useless talk reaching her nuns; but she lost no opportunity of warning them to turn a deaf ear to such murmurs, and to cultivate in themselves the true spirit of large-hearted charity. Shortly after the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy was founded, Mrs. Aikenhead writes as follows to the superior of a house whose projected undertaking—a hospital—seemed likely to be given over by the bishop of the diocese to the new congregation:—

"Let us take care of every illusion of false zeal, or false love of our own institute. Both are intended for the same great end of promoting the glory of our heavenly Father, and the good of the poor. We cannot promote either if charity does not reign in our hearts. All other feelings merge in self; and miserable earthly preference for self will banish the divine spirit from us. Let us remember that no effort of human exertion could succeed in forming their institute if God had not assisted; and should we presume to wish his favours to be confined only to ourselves! Our efforts must be to deserve the fullest measure of the divine blessing on our congregation and the good works entrusted to our care; but would it be like the children of the God of *infinite love* to allow corrupt nature to grow rebellious in our hearts, so as to repine that others equally his children, and redeemed by His precious blood, should also be made the chosen instruments of his mercy to the poor and afflicted? Look into the sentiment and see how unworthy it is of our high vocation. I am certain none of us would be willing to err in point of charity; but we must beware of the illusions of the enemy, and there are some of an insidious nature which may be of serious injury to our souls."

Again she takes an opportunity of enforcing the same high lesson:—

"We ought not to allow that natural little jealousy to influence us; and we must be specially on our guard to mortify at least every exterior expression of it. Whatever remarks are heard in the parlour should be listened to with reserve, and nothing should urge us to give an opinion. Perhaps this rising congregation may be far more pleasing in the divine sight than our own. We have, it is true, all that is perfect in spiritual life, all that can be desired for the accomplishment of our fourth holy vow. Let us praise, and try our best to glorify God for *His* very great gifts; but let each individual be on her guard not to lose the precious fruit of these graces: they are the purchase of His labours and most precious blood, whose children the members of every other Order or congregation in the Church are. And He has told us 'by this alone shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.' I fear that many temptations will arise from *talk* and public surmise and reports—for *our* government will be found fault with—yet it seems pretty certain that *it* is the only one calculated to secure respect for persons employed as we are. Let what is good, and given to us from the hand of God and of his Church, be *prized* and *practised:* time will prove its value; but let all beware of that sort of love for the congregation

which has its source in pride and self-love. True it is that we require self-knowledge, for oh! how many illusions arise in our course? But *we* have no excuse: we have been early warned, and carefully taught from our entrance into religious life. *Our steadiness* annoys some folk, but is it not on principle that we have been steady? Let us try to please Him who has condescended to employ us in His service."

The warning and the counsel are summed up in these impressive words:—

"But, my dear child, the jealousy of others will be no excuse for us at judgment. *We* shall be judged by the golden rule of *charity*. Let us be blind, deaf, and of all things *dumb*, according to holy prudence, and the grace of the Holy Ghost; and let all our forces be employed in promoting God's glory in the good of souls within the limits marked by His divine providence—with a great care for our own souls. What will it avail us to gain the whole world if we lose our souls? All envy of the success of others, all desire of being considered the only persons *fit*, proves want of purity of intention; and worse still, it destroys our peace of mind, and forms a canker calculated to destroy our souls. May our Lord keep us in his Sacred Heart!"

Lastly, the Rev. Mother will have her children rejoice and give God thanks when others are called into the vineyard to labour for His glory and the good of dear old Ireland. When some steps were being taken regarding the Sisters of Mercy which seemed inimical to the interests of her own congregation, she said: "If this be all ordained by our heavenly Father for His own glory our hearts ought to utter a fervent Amen, even if all their advance were to be actually our depression. But in the holy Church there is room for all. We shall please God only by disinterested zeal for His greater glory." Writing again in the same year, she speaks of some new Orders—the Good Shepherd Nuns among the rest—about to be introduced into the country; and she adds: "There will be all the beauty and ornament of variety; and may we emulate the glorious privilege of being interwoven as worthy branches, or even sweet flowers, of the holy garland which is to decorate the dear Island of Saints!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FRIENDS OF THE HEART AND TRUE DISCIPLES—MISTRESS AND NOVICE.

ALL through those days of struggle, vicissitude, labour, and anxiety, Providence never withdrew from Mary Aikenhead the special blessing of our earthly life; she never was left without a band of earnest, devoted, and powerful friends. Moreover, there were given to her true friends of the heart who understood her; who threw all their interest, talent and energy into the work to which she was devoted; and who, as she grew year after year more afflicted and more disabled, supplied to her the active exertion, the vigilant supervision, the direct personal control in many departments, which she was no longer in a position to exercise. Among these true friends and true disciples some must be particularly referred to, because they filled important offices in the congregation, and were the most intimately associated with herself personally. The first in rank and in order was the rectress of St. Vincent's, Mother Francis Magdalen MacCarthy, who, being also Mother-assistant in the congregation, was called on to make the new foundations, to organise or re-organise institutions, as the case might be, and to represent the head superior on many different occasions. Though not so many-sided nor so attractively genial as the Rev. Mother, Mrs. MacCarthy was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the institute, excellently gifted for the posts she had to fill, and fully worthy of the unlimited trust which was reposed in her by the Mother-General, whose successor she was destined to be.

Helena Bridget MacCarthy was born in London on the 11th of February, 1798, and was the fourth daughter of Charles MacCarthy and Mary Strange, both of whom were Irish, the one having been born in Bandon and the other in the city of Cork, and each descended from families once of high station in the South who had for the sake of their religion forfeited nearly all their earthly possessions. One of these ancestors was deprived of his property for refusing to appear in the Protestant Church on Christmas Day—no other act of conformity having been at that time required. Charles MacCarthy being of an ardent and enterprising disposition, and seeing no prospect of advancement in his own country, at a very early age fled from his home and took to a seafaring life in which he distinguished himself, and which he pursued until, being about to marry, he found that the guardians of the young lady to whom he was attached would not consent to the

match except on condition of his giving up the sea service. Mary Strange having lost her father while still a child, was, together with her only brother, adopted by a rich bachelor uncle, who, ceding to the latter a lucrative commercial establishment at Cadiz, removed to London on the marriage of his niece, and settled with the young pair in that city.

Helena while still quite a child showed a very decided aptitude for the charitable work to which she ultimately devoted her life. It was her delight to tend the sick. During a long and dangerous illness of her father she could hardly be kept away from his bedside, where she would stand watching indefatigably the smallest opportunity to render him a service. He used afterwards lovingly call her his little nurse. She had not much of the levity of childhood about her, nor did she display many of its little faults, except perhaps a fit of temper now and then. She had good abilities, and put her mind into whatever she was at, whether study or play. She was active and orderly in her habits; docile and amiable in disposition; somewhat silent and reserved, and yet a favourite with her companions, among whom she was a leader and a peace-maker.

When she was fourteen or fifteen years of age she was placed for her education in a convent of Benedictine Nuns who had taken refuge in England at the time of the French Revolution, and were then established at Old Heath Hall, in Yorkshire. Here, too, she was much liked by her fellow-pupils, and well thought of by her teachers. Her conduct was remarkably uniform without any outward show of piety or regularity. She was always doing the right thing and keeping quietly out of all that she thought wrong. Diligent, and ever beforehand with her duties, she constantly earned for herself several hours of holiday time. At that period she showed not the slightest inclination for religious life—indeed she seemed averse to it.

Shortly after leaving the convent school she made her *debut* in the world, and entered with great spirit into all its gaieties. Just then she became acquainted with Mrs. Aikenhead's lively cousin, Mary Hennessy, who was staying in London and moving in the same circle as Helena MacCarthy's parents. Light-hearted though they were the young ladies did not neglect their religious duties. Their confessor was the Abbé Morel of saintly memory, and by all accounts he "kept them pretty tight." By-and-by she was invited by her cousin, Mrs. Wiseman (the mother of the future Cardinal) to spend a season in Paris. She was at this time tall and slight in figure, with a distinguished and somewhat commanding air. Her features were not regular, but the expression of her eyes and mouth was pleasing; and when she was with those she loved, her countenance was full of sweetness. She was much admired and had many suitors; but as the French in general look for rank and wealth, one after another of

the admirers withdrew when it was found that, although an ancient and even aristocratic pedigree could readily be established, a considerable fortune was not forthcoming. One, however, a handsome young officer in the Garde de Corps, persevered in his attentions, and succeeded in gaining her affections. Enquiries made by her family as to the gentleman's character and circumstances proved exceedingly unsatisfactory, but Miss MacCarthy would credit no evil report, and it was only on the morning of the day fixed for the marriage that, through the prompt interference of her brother, she was saved from an irrevocable union with a man altogether unworthy of her. The blow was severe, and was borne with fortitude; but it was some time before the fond delusion was dispelled and her eyes were opened to the imminence of the danger she had escaped.

About this time her father died suddenly, and she returned to London. Probably it was then that she thought of joining the Sisters of Charity, of which congregation her friend Mary Hennessy had become a member; but she said nothing about her intentions, and no one had the least suspicion that she ever dreamt of religious life. She recovered her good spirits, and mixed in society as usual, until, her mother's health failing, she devoted herself to the tender care of the aged invalid. Sometimes mother and daughter boarded for months together at the convent where Helena had been educated; enjoying the simple occupations and innocent amusements of the place, and to all appearance perfectly happy. During a sojourn at the convent Mrs. MacCarthy died. A word which fell from the daughter's lips on the sad day of her mother's decease was the first inkling her friends received of what might possibly be her final determination: "Don't be anxious on my account," she said, "God will provide for me." For some months she remained at the convent, where two of her sisters were professed nuns, and where she had many friends. This she allowed herself in order to enjoy the last of the society of those she so dearly loved, and to whom she at last disclosed the resolution she had taken. She became quite domesticated in the community, and was treated in some degree almost like a postulant, sometimes wearing the habit, and lending a hand to any work within her power. The parting cost a severe struggle, and she would start up in her sleep at night, exclaiming: "Have I said I'll do it?" At length the heart-rending, and as she believed the last earthly farewell was spoken, and having gone up to London to wind up her little affairs, she made what preparations were necessary, and in September, 1829, took her departure for Dublin.

Miss MacCarthy had never been in Ireland, and had no acquaintance to meet her on arriving at Kingstown. But Mrs. Aikenhead went herself to receive her on landing and conduct her to her new home. The Rev. Mother was not long in discovering the many fine

qualities of head and heart which her postulant possessed; and though they were dissimilar in many respects a strong friendship was soon established between these two great souls. In January, 1830, Helena MacCarthy received the religious habit, and the name of Francis Magdalen. She was first employed in the office of infirmarian, and all the time of her noviceship had special charge of the Rev. Mother, who was already broken down from overwork and want of care. After her profession she was put in the post of superintendent of the House of Refuge, and it was in that employ her thoroughly well-formed business habits were developed. She remodelled the institution; organised the system of book-keeping which has ever since been in use in the houses of the Sisters of Charity; and by taking part in all the duties of the establishment, however laborious or revolting to nature they might be, was a bright example to all. Soon after she was sent, as already noted, to take up the Townsend-street Asylum, and set everything there on a good footing. On the opening of St. Vincent's in 1834, she was appointed rectress of the hospital, a post which she held as long as Mrs. Aikenhead lived.

A few years later Mother Francis Magdalen was nominated by the ecclesiastical superior one of the assistants of the congregation; and in this capacity she found herself obliged to be absent from St. Vincent's for weeks or perhaps months at a time, making new foundations or attending to the affairs of distant missions. In 1840 she was sent to Preston. While she was waiting to see certain arrangements carried out there, Mrs. Aikenhead contrived to give her the very unexpected, and on her part entirely unsought-for gratification of spending a few weeks with her dear Benedictine sisters and friends in their new convent at Princethorpe—Sister Mary Xavier Hennessy accompanying her. Waterford and Clarinbridge were the other foundations she made up to the period we have now arrived at.

Among Mrs. Aikenhead's devoted friends and disciples we must here mention one who, it is hardly too much to say, was hands, feet, and eyes to the imprisoned Rev. Mother. She was sent hither and thither on confidential embassies. The most important instructions were verbally entrusted to her, and by her in the same way imparted to the local superiors. Her rare intelligence, her gracious vivacity, and her happy manner fitted her specially for this service. As she flitted from convent to convent she looked like the Mother's spirit on the wing. When the embassy was accomplished, and the pinions were folded, she stood like an attendant angel by the side of her superior and her best beloved friend.

This dear sister's acquaintance with Mrs. Aikenhead began at York, where she was a pupil at the time that the two Irish ladies were in the novitiate, preparing for their mission as Sisters of Charity. It was the custom in the convent for the nuns to go to the children's house on

recreation days and help the young people to keep holiday. On one of these occasions the little girl we are now speaking of was greatly attracted by Sister Augustine's noble presence and splendid eyes, and thought there was something very fascinating in her manner; while she herself did not pass unobserved by the Irish novice. When the next gala day came, Sister Augustine was looked for in vain. She had left for Ireland. Years passed away; the little girl grew up, left school, and mixed much in the gay world. She did not forget Sister Augustine; and in the midst of a very pleasant life it entered her head to go to the object of her youthful admiration—now the great Rev. Mother of the Sisters of Charity—and ask to be received as a postulant. She met with a very friendly reception, and was assured she might come. By-and-by, however, she went on a visit to friends in a distant part of the country, greatly enjoyed life in their society, gave up the thought of religious vocation, and wrote to Mrs Aikenhead to that effect. The letter containing this announcement was never received; and when the writer some time afterwards went to see her friend the Rev. Mother, the latter met her with open arms as one who was to be a child of the house. Finally she made up her mind to join the congregation, bade farewell to her friends, and entered the novitiate. There were some who did not think the little lady was just the sort of person to forget the elegancies and forsake the joys of life, and settle down into a hard-working Sister of Charity. But Mrs. Aikenhead knew better: "Leave her to *me*," she would say, "leave her to *me*." The mother's training did the work; and thenceforth mother and daughter became inseparable.[1]

We now come to a most important member of the congregation, Mother Mary Lucy Clifford, who having been appointed assistant in the noviceship shortly after her profession, and eventually mistress of novices, continued to hold that onerous post until her death many years later. Mrs. Aikenhead made a good choice when she confided the young Sisters of Charity to Mother Mary Lucy; and from the day the appointment was made she had no cause for painful anxiety regarding the junior members of the congregation.

Miss Mary Clifford was the second daughter of the Hon. Thomas Clifford and his wife Henrietta-Philippina, Baroness de Lutzow, and was born at Schwerin in Germany. She lost both parents before she was eight years old, and was sent at an early age with her two sisters to Newhall, a convent of Augustinians of the Holy Sepulchre, in Essex, for her education. Though of a very cheerful disposition

[1] As this highly valued member of the congregation still lives and labours for it, we are compelled out of deference to her humility to refrain from giving her name. The same cause precludes the mention of other dear and honoured names we would willingly introduce—names sweet and familiar as household words to thousands over whom they have exercised a powerful influence for good through life.

it does not appear that the world had ever any attraction for her. After she left the convent she seems to have had no interests beyond those of a school girl. She enjoyed the quiet pleasures of country life, and continued to take lessons in music and drawing for which she had remarkable taste. When about twenty-two years of age she resolved to devote her life to the service of God in the poor, and to become a Sister of Charity. The only real pang she had to suffer in leaving her home for Ireland was in the separation from her sisters, for in them her affections were concentrated. "On Thursday evening," writes Mrs. Aikenhead on the 19th of April, 1836, "arrived Miss Clifford, a very nice unaffected young person, just twenty-two. She seems to have a most true understanding both of religious vocation and of that of a Sister of Charity. She has been nine years at Newhall, loving the nuns there ardently; yet nothing but a Sister of Charity did she ever think of being." When she entered the novitiate in Stanhope-street, she was a fine, healthy-looking girl; but before long, owing, partly to the change of climate, and partly to the mismanagement of a young assistant-mistress of Novices possessing more zeal than discretion, on whom, in Mrs. Aikenhead's absence at St. Vincent's, the charge of the novices devolved, Miss Clifford's strength failed, and she had to be sent as invalided to the hospital. Suffering much from gastric affection and from inflammation of the eyes, she gave the greatest edification by her sweet patience. Her eyes were so sore, and the affection was so serious that she had to be kept in total darkness and to submit to remedies of the most painful nature. But nothing could extort a complaint from her lips. When she began to recover a little Mrs. Aikenhead gave her a guitar that she might solace the dark and lonesome hours with music. It was during this illness that she solicited the name of Lucy, as the saint of that name—one of the five Virgin Patronesses—is invoked by persons suffering from maladies of the eyes. Her wish was complied with, and whether the dear saint interceded for her devout client or not, it is at any rate certain that the inflammation subsided, and she was enabled to return to Stanhope-street.

All through her noviceship Sister Mary Lucy was a model to those about her. They used to say it was a lesson even to see her sweep her cell. Nothing was trifling in her opinion that was done for God; and her way of performing the commonest manual work was calculated to impress one with the idea that she was doing something most important, in which her whole attention was engaged to give it its full perfection. Shortly after she received the habit she was sent to St. Vincent's Hospital to serve in the wards. Here, too, she was an example of humility and charity; and her efforts to conquer the repugnance of nature in the performance of the most loathsome offices were so excessive that it was often necessary to control her in that direc-

tion. Her large fortune of £4,000 she placed in Mrs. Aikenhead's hands to be employed by her in any way she pleased, either for the poor or for the congregation. She never even inquired what use had been made of it. All through her life she was placed in circumstances which called upon her to practise the virtues of renunciation and self-denial in her affections, her tastes, her temperament. Relatives to whom she was deeply attached she never had an opportunity of meeting during her long religious life. It would have been a delight to her to train voices and to form a choir to sing at Mass and Benediction, but for a certain period her only assistant in the choir was a lay sister whose musical acquirements were not remarkable, and the singing, such as it was, had to be got through without the aid of an instrument —for there was no such thing in the house. When, at length, voices were at her command, and she might have exercised her taste and her talent in cultivating them, the time had gone by, and she was prevented by ill-health from even presiding in the choir. She was of an ardent temperament, and the subduing of her natural impetuosity was to be a life-long exercise and the matter of many an heroic act. In fine, the whole life of Mother Mary Lucy was one of continual sacrifice; and if her discipline was severe in the novitiate, she neither counselled nor required anything more than she had practised herself. The only cause she ever gave Mrs. Aikenhead for uneasiness was when she fell ill.

"Now is our time for embarrassment," writes the Rev. Mother. "Truly we have not one single person capable of training except dear Mary Lucy. Pray for her. She is very delicate, but more really clever than I could have ever known, except by experience. Her zeal is as ardent as if she were in the greatest health, but I do not mean to say that she ever wishes to do anything not consistent with care of health. It is her prudent good sense and ardour to promote good, that deserves to be called *true* zeal: not impetuosity or self-sufficiency ought to be styled that holy virtue which is truly 'practical love of God.' Oh, may it burn in all hearts! Then we shall neither be cast down by adversity, nor elated with success. *Patient zeal*, which feels for the want of cleverness or virtue in others, and *prudence* which forbears to require from such as are slow what we can ourselves accomplish, will help in time to encourage all to take a share in our works."

Again the Rev. Mother writes:—

"You will be grieved to hear that dear Mother Mary Lucy is really only struggling through frequent illness to keep going at her very arduous duties. She does struggle edifyingly and energetically—but is ever a source of anxiety to my poor heart. Pray that our Lord may spare her to us, for truly her value is inestimable. She has frequently to keep [to] her bed, yet in that painful dwelling-place she is able to transact her arduous business. So thank our heavenly Father with us for the same, and for all His mercies; and pray that we may receive all the trials and difficulties, by which in His wisdom His divine Majesty sees necessary to exercise our Faith, Hope, and Charity, for the greater increase of the same.—A.M.D.G."

Mother Mary Lucy Clifford is so inseparably associated even in idea with her flock that we cannot leave her standing alone in this chapter, but fain must give her a young Sister of Charity of her own training to bear her company. Let us take one who was truly formed after her own heart; who went to heaven early, leaving behind her a sweet example and a tender memory—let us take Sister Mary Fidelis Segrave. She was one of those strong, earnest characters that Mrs. Clifford took special pleasure in guiding, and well did the pupil correspond with the care bestowed on her. She saw at once the work that was before her—the subjugation of a disposition naturally proud and independent—and set herself earnestly, with God's help, to accomplish it. During her novitiate she was sent to St. Vincent's Hospital and placed in charge of one of the wards. She used to say "We must put human respect aside when there is question of the comfort of our poor patients;" and nothing that could conduce to that end would she allow either apothecary or wardmaid to omit. So much aptitude did Mary Fidelis show for the care of the sick that on her return to the novitiate she was employed as infirmarian, and had charge of Sister Mary Ambrose Bellew during her last illness. The ministress, to whom she was a great comfort in her capacity of infirmarian, was totally ignorant of the strong dread almost amounting to horror which she had of death, and therefore never spared her feelings in any way. Sister Mary Ambrose breathed her last abou t ten o'clock at night after the community had retired. The ministress appointed the infirmarian and a lay-sister to watch with the remains, saying they should be relieved very early in the morning. Sister Mary Fidelis after a moment's pause acquiesced, giving no indication of the severe trial it was to her to take that post, and it was not till long afterwards that the ministress heard how much that act of obedience cost the novice.

After she had made her vows she was engaged in the night school while in the mornings she used to be employed by Mrs. Clifford in preparing manuscripts for the press, or revising proof-sheets, a work which she was able for, as she had been thoroughly educated. Great was her love for the congregation, and deeply she appreciated its spirit and the helps it affords for attaining its two-fold object—the perfection of its members and the spiritual and temporal benefit of the poor. Her dutiful affection for her superiors was likewise remarkable. At one time she had a great dread of being sent away from the one she was under, who knew her well; but obedience having required the removal, she afterwards expressed her unfeigned astonishment at the loving condescension of God, who had taken from her all such apprehension and made her feel as happy with the one to whom she had gone. She could not bear to see anyone in trouble: once seeing a sister a little depressed, she said sweetly to another: "Come,

let us join Sister N. N.; there is some little cloud over her that we must try to disperse;" and soon her charity and affability restored peace to the sufferer.

Even before her profession she was not strong, but it was always hoped her health would improve. Two or three times she was sent to St. Vincent's to be under medical treatment; she would rally for a while; but at length she was carried there for the last time, to linger for some months and then to die. After her removal to the hospital, she was able occasionally to attend some of the exercises of common life, but she was not allowed to perform the usual humiliations in the refectory. This she regretted, because she had found these practices so useful for subduing what she called her "proud will." From her death-bed she sent to thank Mother Mary Lucy for every humiliation she had given her, saying, with a smile, that "they were neither few nor small." Naturally she had a great dread of death, and never really brought the matter home to herself. Hence, though everyone else saw how inevitable was the stroke, no idea of danger ever occurred to her, and it was no easy task to break it to her. When the sister charged with the commission had succeeded in making her understand her state, she started, and asked in her own peculiar downright manner: "Do you then mean to say that I am to die?" The sister replied that the issue was at least doubtful. She was silent for a moment as was her wont on serious occasions, and then she said: "Would you wish me to be anointed?" The sister replied that it would be a comfort to everyone. "Then by all means," said Mary Fidelis. After this she never lost sight of the subject, nor seemed to have a hesitation in speaking of it. The only one with whom she avoided it was her favourite sister Helen, who was a member of the congregation, and attended her during her last illness. Though she would not trust herself to say so, she begged of the confessor on the day she received Extreme Unction to tell her sister how much she had been comforted and edified by her composure on the occasion. Another thing that gratified her was the conduct of her family to whom she was greatly attached; and she desired her sister to say to them how grateful she was for the sensible manner in which they had acted during her illness—giving no trouble to the community. The only subject that caused her anxiety was the long absence from the sacraments of a very near and dear relative; but she dictated a letter to him, which, with the help of her prayers, brought about the desired effect.

During those days of suffering she read with delight the little treatise on "The manner of conversing with God," and used to say, "the man who wrote it deserves to be canonised; it was my support in life and is my consolation in death." In one of her confidential talks with her sister she said to her, "Remember never to begin any

action, were it only to work a pair of scapulars, without offering it for some particular intention." She used to exhort the sisters who came to visit her during her illness, never to let pass an opportunity of showing their respect for even the smallest observances of their rule.

New schools were about being opened at one of the convents, and she expressed an earnest wish that she might live over the day, lest her death might cast a gloom on it. Her desire was gratified. Of all the feasts of the year the Ascension was her favourite. Hearing that it was very near, she said she should be glad to die on that day, and asked a sister to sing for her the appropriate hymn, *O Rex Gloria*, saying, "I should like to be in on the tune of it when I join the heavenly choir." She died on the eve of the Ascension, and for some hours before her death she kept up a constant repetition of the *O Rex Gloria*—they were her last words on earth; and those around her humbly hoped that she took up their echo in the heaven of the faithful; for, according to the testimony of her superiors, no more appropriate name could have been given to her than the one she bore: *Fidelis*. She had been faithful to her rules, faithful to her vows, and affectionately faithful to her superiors.

END OF BOOK III.

# BOOK IV.

# Book IV.

1845—1858.

## CHAPTER I.

OUR LADY'S MOUNT—TIPPERARY—RULING BY THE PEN.

DURING the winter of 1844, Mrs. Aikenhead, in addition to her other maladies, suffered much from frequent attacks of bronchitis, and in the following spring change of air was recommended. At first it was hoped that driving out three or four times a week would answer the purpose, for the Rev. Mother was unwilling to leave St. Vincent's, her home for the past eleven years. But the fatigue of journeying up and down the hospital stairs did away with any advantage she might derive from her carriage airing, and it was decided that a country house should be taken for her. After some months spent in visiting every residence in the vicinity of Dublin which the agents had on their books, a good house belonging to members of the Society of Friends, at Harold's Cross, was selected. As it was large it promised tolerable accommodation; there was space for building on; and there were some fields and a large garden round the mansion.

The season was advancing; it was desirable that Mrs. Aikenhead should remove to her country quarters with as little delay as possible; and the tenants were requested to vacate the premises with all convenient expedition. Nothing could be more honourable than the way in which the head landlords, a family named Webb, behaved on the occasion. For, before the transaction was completed, the Mount Jerome Cemetery Company, who own the adjoining grounds, wishing to take the house for the use of their committee, made an offer considerably higher than Mrs. Aikenhead's proposal; which offer the honest Quakers declined, saying they had always been fairly treated by Catholics, and would not break their promise to the Sisters of Charity.

Possession was hurriedly taken in the beginning of September, 1845; as soon as a room could be got ready the Rev. Mother removed to her country house—her destined home for the rest of her earthly days; and the large parlour having been arranged as a chapel, the Blessed Sacrament was deposited in the tabernacle on the 14th of September, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: from which day is dated the foundation of the Convent of Our Lady's Mount. The privilege of being the mother house, hitherto enjoyed by Stanhope-street, was by order of the ecclesiastical superior transferred to the suburban residence at Harold's Cross; the novices were removed thither from St. Vincent's, where Mother Mary Lucy and her flock had been lodged for some time; and by dint of management worthy of a quartermaster-general all were packed into the new house, which, as Mrs. Aikenhead observed, would really have afforded no more than comfortable accommodation for a respectable family of twelve persons. However, the space outside in the gardens and green fields made up for the stinted in-door room. The Rev. Mother, much as it had cost her to leave "the dear hospital," found herself wonderfully refreshed by the change. The sweet, clear air was in itself an enjoyment highly appreciated; the drive round the grounds in a bath-chair was regarded as an extremely pleasant excursion; and sitting for hours in the leafy shade of an ancient elm or wide-branched sycamore, while she wrote to the distant convents, was so sweet a refreshment after years of imprisonment that her gratitude to the good God breaks out in her letters, and sunny gleams flit over pages of very serious import. "My health," she says, "has been better within the last fortnight than it has been for so long at a time for years. I have been ever since the 25th of August every day in the dear, pure air for some hours. To-day I wrote two notes whilst in it, seated under the trees which are close on the edge of the little grass plot under my bedroom window, I in my bath-chair."

Indeed, as old age crept on, her admiration for the beauties of nature seemed to increase rather than diminish; and now in the garden and the fields she had wherewithal to delight her pious and poetic mind; while from her sitting-room she could rest her weary eyes on the leafy greenery, watch the play of light and shadow on a pond hard by, and observe the changes of the sky from morn till eve. "It was most animating," says one who knew her well, "to hear her praising the beauties of a flower; for which reason her children vied with one another in having flowers to present to her, so that they might hear the grandeur of her praises of the great Creator. The tint, the leafage, the form, would be minutely examined, and praise returned to the Giver of all good gifts. It was her custom during many years of her life to watch the setting sun: and even in old age she would have her chair placed near a window whence she would

have a good view of the 'glorious sun,' as she would say; and while watching the silver and golden clouds until they had disappeared, she would utter the most exalted sentiments of praise and prayer, and exclaim: 'What must be the glory of heaven!' And every one present was sure to be called to share with her the vision of the glorious sun, and unite in extolling the magnificence of the great God."

The Rev. Mother's second autumn in Our Lady's Mount was enjoyed in the same way as the first. Writing in September, 1846, she says: "To-day I spent out in the clear heavenly air from before one to four o'clock, holding conference with some of our youngsters more gay than grave; and then [had] a very edifying visit from Father Stephen F——, the first he had made since we came here, and that was a full year yesterday. Will you tell dear Mary Agnes with very true love that I actually commenced a letter to her, meaning it to reach her on the 8th, and to enclose a note for you. Truly, truly, dearest, my faults are great, but in this delay about writing there is not even the shadow of a fault, so you and all must be very merciful to a poor old sinner of a mother."

In Harold's Cross, Mrs. Aikenhead had the junior members of the congregation constantly around her, and this association with youth no doubt helped to keep the now aged mother fresh in heart and spirits. She used to take great pleasure in having the novices accompany her when she went out in her bath-chair. They would all laugh and talk, and draw her round and round the lawn. If anything amusing turned up she enjoyed the fun like the merest girl of the party; and if any untoward accident occurred she set matters to rights in her peculiarly decisive manner, or prescribed one of her ludicrously simple remedies. A novice was one day drawing the bath-chair, when to her horror she upset the vehicle and the Rev. Mother fell to the ground. Age and infirmities made it no easy business to raise the heavy form; but all Mrs. Aikenhead's anxiety was about the terrified novice, who, thinking she had done irreparable mischief, turned deadly pale. The mother took great pains to comfort her, and then sent her into the house to get a glass of wine forthwith. For another novice who was frightened at having broken something rather expensive, she prescribed the same ready restorative.

In the spring of 1845, a building sixty feet long by twenty-four feet wide was erected, which gave a good refectory, a chapel, and twelve cells. As soon as the new chapel was in use the large parlour which had been the temporary chapel was converted into a school-room, to which the young women employed in the neighbouring factories resorted after work hours for religious instruction and to learn to read and write. It was also used for the Sunday-school classes. After a while, however, the number of pupils increasing,

the large new refectory was turned into a school-room, and the parlour used as a refectory. The visitation of the poor was carried on by the Harold's Cross community, who took in the large and impoverished neighbourhood of Francis-street in their charitable rounds. In the first days of the mission the work was very trying to the nuns, for not unfrequently they had to go without having any alms to give to the poor. Soon, however, an old friend and benefactor of the congregation, Mr. Michael Sweetman of Longtown came to their assistance, and Mrs. Aikenhead was gladdened by receiving a notice from that charitable gentleman that he was about to transfer to her in Bank stock a sum of £1,000, the interest of which was to be spent in the relief of the sick-poor, principally those of his own parish of Francis-street.

After a few years Mrs. Aikenhead was able to build a large school-house at some distance from the convent, but still within the grounds. The building contains besides the class-rooms, a large refectory where the poorer children are daily served with a good meal of bread and broth, two fine play-rooms for use in bad weather, and a room devoted to the erection of a crib at Christmas. When the new schools were opened the spacious apartment in the convent which had hitherto been used as a school became available as a refectory for the community.

In the same year that Our Lady's Mount became the mother-house of the Sisters of Charity the congregation made its tenth foundation, and on the feast of the Guardian Angels, 1845, took possession of the convent of Our Lady of Angels, Clonmel. The funds for the maintenance of the community were supplied by Sister Mary Emilian Bradshaw, whose ample fortune was a great God-send to the congregation and helped to support other houses as well as this foundation. She was a convert to the Catholic faith, and one of the most devoted servants of the poor that ever wore the garb of a Sister of Charity. The simple story of her childhood is worth relating.

Letitia Bradshaw was born about the beginning of the present century. Her father dying when she was a child left her and a boy younger than herself heirs to a considerable property in the county of Tipperary. Her mother, a very bigoted Protestant, brought up the children in the same religion with great strictness. The little ones loved one another with that intimate affection which is often observable in the case of twins. All their tastes and pleasures coincided, and they took their amusements together. The boy, however, was the gentler of the two, and friends said he should have been the girl. One of their greatest delights was reading the Bible, and they would talk over and wonder at its marvellous beautiful stories. They were very good and pious in their own way. One of the first things that raised a doubt in their minds about the truth of

the Protestant religion was the horror their mother evinced at their saying the Hail Mary. They thought it a very unaccountable thing that she should speak as she did about a holy person mentioned with such respect in the Bible, and they kept pondering on the subject until it took firm possession of their mind. The poor mother suffered for a long time from delicacy of health, and was not a little cross: possibly as "out of evil cometh good" this worked with the rest for the children's salvation. At length, when Letitia was about twelve years of age, the mother died. At once the children set about becoming Catholics, and went together to announce their intention to the parish priest. His reverence must have been surprised to see the little pair present themselves on such an errand. However, to try their steadiness, he told them that *he* could not make them Catholics—that something more was required for that; and he put them off for the moment. Finding that their fervour was not to be cooled by a repulse, and that Catholics they would be, he, after a time, prepared them for the sacraments and received them into the Church. They were so ardent, yet had so little knowledge or experience that the first Good Friday after this event they spent in the fields. They had heard of fasting, resolved to comply with the ordinance, and were afraid to remain at home where food was at hand. So they strolled out, and gathering a little sorrel, which was not supposed to be food, eat it so that they might not die of hunger.

Not long after this they parted. Letitia was placed at Miss Bridgeford's school in Tipperary, and her brother was sent to Clongowes Wood College. The boy grew up gentle, pious, and beloved; but the seeds of early death were in his constitution, and in a few years' time consumption set in. As a last chance he was ordered when about seventeen years of age to go on a voyage to Lisbon. Accompanied by his sister and her maid he set out on this hopeless expedition. The pair were so young, so devoted to one another, and so friendless, that they excited deep interest and compassion. On reaching Lisbon he became so much worse that the physicians advised his immediate return to Ireland. But hereupon arose a difficulty. The young travellers had been advised to take with them just sufficient money to pay their passage out and to defray the first expenses on landing, while for the rest they should await remittances from their banker. Now they found they could not wait for their letters of credit, and they knew not what to do. God, however, provided a friend for the orphans. The captain of the vessel in which they had made the voyage hearing of their distress, came to see them, and in the kindest manner offered them a homeward passage, which they gratefully accepted. He proved quite a father, and left nothing undone for their consolation. But the poor boy reached home only to die. Soon after he had landed he gave up his young spirit happily

to his Maker, leaving in his sister's faithful heart a memory that was a solace to her throughout her whole life. She kept up a constant intercourse with his soul by prayer and confidences and pious offices; and she tenderly believed and frequently declared that she experienced his assistance as well in the declining years of her life as in the days of her girlhood. No sooner was he dead when her legal friends advised Letitia to take prompt measures to possess herself of the property, now all her own, and introduce herself to the tenantry. This she did. To considerable energy of character she united a childlike simplicity, which last-named trait, however, did not prevent her from managing her property judiciously and avoiding the matrimonial nets spread for the proprietress from time to time.

For some years Miss Bradshaw lived a sort of school-girl life, as parlour boarder at Miss Bridgeford's school, then lately removed to Cork, throwing herself heartily into all the little interests of the establishment, improving herself in every accomplishment, and always exercising a good influence over her companions. Her ample means enabled her to give large sums of money to the poor and to churches. She attended poor-schools and Christian Doctrine Associations; and, in short, led a very holy, simple life, at the period of existence when most girls love the world best, and are filled with its hopes. It was at this time that she became acquainted with the Very Rev. Dr. Russell, of the Order of Preachers, with whom she preserved a holy and faithful friendship until her death. Another friend of hers was the great Apostle of Temperance, Father Mathew.

Meanwhile, God was drawing her more and more closely to Himself. Her first fervour had never cooled; but finding all her good works too little for her love she resolved to embrace religious life. For a time she was held back by conscientious difficulties regarding the duties of property, but when she discovered that these could be settled for the benefit of religion, she at once prepared for the step. Having endowed some good works in which she was interested, and made generous donations to dear and special friends, she brought the bulk of her property to the Sisters of Charity.

Miss Bradshaw entered the novitiate in Stanhope-street in the year 1833. Her humility, generosity, simplicity, and zeal, greatly endeared her to Mrs. Aikenhead, who, writing to the Cork convent soon after the new postulant arrived, thus speaks of her. "I like Miss Bradshaw and think her qualified for us. She seems to be what we could most desire in amiability of disposition. I think I never met a more truly unaffected young person. She seems to like us very well. Her candour and pleasing innocence have made her quite at home with me. If God so will that she persevere she will be a true acquisition. Give my kindest regards to Father Russell. I shall write to him one day, but meanwhile assure him that I shall do my

best to enter into all his views. You may add that I do not wonder at his sentiments towards Miss B——; she does credit to his judgment as far as my observation can reach, and I shall be much disappointed if anything lead me to alter my opinion."

In those early days of the congregation, when the poor and the institutions were in a great measure supported by bazaars and such like devices, Sister Emilian Bradshaw's accomplishments and indefatigable industry made her particularly useful. But it was the ardour of an uncommon zeal for souls that was the main feature of her religious life. It was early manifested, and it never abated. She was brought from the novitiate to St. Stephen's-green immediately on the foundation of the hospital. There she had full play for her holy passion for souls; there she found her true delight; and there she was destined to find her home for forty years.

Sister Mary Emilian's great desire was to see a house of the Sisters of Charity founded in the town of Tipperary—the chief town of the county in which her property was situated, and she had set apart a sum of money for that purpose. Great difficulties, however, opposed the realisation of her wishes. The then bishop would not give his consent to the project. In the end the fund destined for Tipperary was transferred to Clonmel, which town, although situated in the same county, is not in the same diocese. It was not until 1845 that, as we have said, the foundation was actually made. The bishop, Dr. Foran, whose kindness the Sisters of Charity had already experienced in another part of the diocese, namely, in Waterford, was far from placing any difficulty in the way of the foundation. Dr. Burke, the parish priest of SS. Peter and Paul's, purchased a house for the community next to his own and close to the church; Mrs. MacCarthy and a companion went down to Clonmel, and were followed soon after by three other sisters. Before long they were in full work, visiting the sick in their own and the adjoining parishes, attending at the workhouse, and instructing adults. In course of time, the community having been increased, they opened large day-schools, a Sunday-school, and an evening-school for the young women who work in the factories.

When the Sisters of Charity began their labours in Clonmel they did not find a satisfactory state of things prevailing. The principal wealth of the town and the neighbourhood was in the hands of the Society of Friends. These influential people, to whom alone the poor could look for help and employment, naturally concerned themselves not at all with the religious affairs of the people. There was little piety and less charity among the population. The presence of the nuns among them, and the establishment of a convent, which proved to be a centre of attraction to the well-disposed, wrought a beneficial change. The piety of the young people attending the schools soon

became remarkable. The better classes, taking a pride in the institution which had risen up among them, nobly aided the sisters in their undertakings, made their annual bazaar invariably a success, contributed generously towards the Christmas distribution to the poor, and, mindful also to the wants of the community, made many kind and useful presents to the convent itself. To the Rev. Mother many a joy was brought by the accounts sent up of the progress of the good work in gallant Tipperary; while Sister Emilian Bradshaw, as she laboured unweariedly in the wards of St. Vincent's, thanked God that there were Sisters of Charity visiting the sick, and relieving the destitute, and instructing the ignorant, in a place where no such blessings would have been enjoyed had not the good God given her the means of securing them.

Mrs. Aikenhead, though now more than ever restricted as to locomotion, found herself virtually at the head of ten different houses, all engaged in important, varied, and absorbing works. The most that she could do was to drive out occasionally to visit the convents in or near Dublin. She was never able to accomplish a journey to Cork after the year 1828, and she never saw her convents in Waterford, Clarinbridge, and Clonmel. So good a memory had she, however, and so well developed was the organ of locality in her head, that even the unvisited houses, with all their interior arrangements and their outward surroundings, were individually mapped out before her mind's eye; and she oftentimes astonished her distant communities by her reference to sites and local peculiarities, and the vividness with which she recalled the descriptions which had been given to her perhaps years before. God had certainly greatly blessed her in this—that among those whom He had called to be Sisters of Charity were many women highly gifted by nature and grace, who imbibed her spirit in its very essence, and were able to carry out her instructions with an understanding heart, and an intelligence that was not found wanting in unforeseen and difficult circumstances.

But well endowed though they might be, they nevertheless were often young and inexperienced. Even the Sisters of Charity—a chosen band though they were—did not at any one time number among them a great many who were fit for the position of rectress in a newly-founded house. Mrs. Aikenhead sometimes nominated to that office a sister who was only a short time professed, and she had, in point of fact, to train the young superior. This trouble she undertook all the more willingly because, as old age was now gaining rapidly on her, she was exceedingly anxious that the spirit which animated the first band of Sisters of Charity should be infused into the second, and thence transmitted to future generations. This special training was principally carried on by frequent intercourse with the superiors who were within a convenient distance of the mother-house, and by a

constant and unreserved written correspondence with those who were far away. Not indeed that her letters were always, or often, volumes of instructions, or at any time a series of minute orders and detailed regulations hampering to subordinate authority. No; she did not interfere unnecessarily; but when advice and help were wanted she gave both, freely, promptly, and largely. It was the keeping up of the fundamental spirit that she aimed at; and this she did quite naturally and efficiently by pouring out, in talk or in writing, her own thoughts as they were suggested by the circumstances brought under her notice. Moreover, the young superiors engaged her sympathy to the fullest extent on another account; for she had a fellow-feeling with them—remembering what a dread she had had of being placed in authority, and how early she had been forced to accept responsibility. Writing to a newly-appointed superior who trembled at the responsibilities of her office and her own unfitness, Mrs. Aikenhead thus expressed herself:—

"With all the anxiety you express, and I know feel weightily, yet I am quite satisfied (and hope not to be disappointed in my expectations) that by your humbly praying and exercising yourself in humble dependence on our heavenly Father, you will be enabled to fulfil your arduous duties in training the little community to exact observance and fidelity in fulfilling their engagements. Do all on your part steadily, and as fervently as you can urge your poor nature to creep on; if you cannot walk as a stout soldier, even take St. Teresa's advice, and *trail* yourself onwards in the disposition to be holding the station of a poor worm before the Divine Majesty, who has Himself placed you within the inner court of his earthly habitation. Beware of despondency. If we be truly humble we shall *never* despond. Fear not to rely on the intellect which God has given you, even if you dread being inclined to see faults in others too clearly. You are not to close your eyes but to raise your heart to God, and undertake simply and charitably to do your part in trying to improve, to admonish, and to correct those dear spouses of his, in order to render them more perfect observers of the holy Rule He has ordained for our perfection."

Regarding some difficulty or perplexity that occurred in one of the houses touching external things, the Rev. Mother thus writes, after expressing the alarm into which she was at first thrown by the intelligence:

"Well, I called Mother Mary Lucy, who, without all the experience of dear Mother rectress MacCarthy, has quite enough of the good sense which is a treasure, and possesses that degree of religion, feeling, and experience which is a real support to me. She knows the world and human nature in the way that our Lord Himself teaches it. Well then: we discussed every point, and though both would be delighted to have the power to send forward our dear head-piece,[1] yet we are not so much dismayed as first impressions led me to apprehend. I hope our Lord Himself directed the affair. Per-

[1] Mrs. MacCarthy.

haps any stir forward (I allude to Mother M'C—— going over) may not be propitious, except in as far as it would relieve you of all responsibility. But, my dear child, go to our Lord in the poor little throne of his love. The Eternal One is our Father and dear Spouse. Call Him by fervent desire into your own poor heart, and accustom yourself to hold counsel with the wisdom of the Most High. His Divine Majesty will not call you to a higher responsibility than He can help you to fulfil; nor need you fear being called to account by us here poor mortals—weak, and often intemperate as some of us may be betimes. We are under his guidance, and I hope ready to view all in the order of his all-wise Providence. So, dear child, stand your ground; pray, act, and speak according to prudence, and let the lesson you tell me of teach you the necessity of entering deeply into a study of the interior life. In proportion as we walk in the Divine presence our conduct in necessary intercourse with creatures will be each day more and more discreet. If we are faithful in humbling ourselves when either vanity or any other inordinate feeling shall predominate or lead us astray, we shall become more pleasing to God. Never allow yourself to lose the beautiful flower of humility, and be the better pleased to present it unfeignedly at the foot of the lowly throne in the tabernacle, in proportion as the fault which gives you the humiliation is more galling to self-love. Beware of finding fault with persons whose conduct and actions may really at the moment be such as to call down special blessings on them. And recollect that we who claim an honour from being the imitators of the poor and suffering and humble Saviour, have no right to complain of being overlooked. We must not be exacting or proud observers of our holy mother Poverty. Above all, we must not speak with a show of discontent towards any, even those whom we know to be inimical to us. I have said more, I am very certain, than need be. But, dear child, every word treating of humility or charity helps us on nearer to the fountain of light and holy counsel. May the beams shine over you and support you, even if you do not feel all the comfort of the strengthening influx."

Again, to a new superior who was frightened at her appointment and its responsibilities, the Rev. Mother writes:—

"Do, my dear ——, exert the good sense with which God has blessed you, but above all, exercise unlimited confidence in Him who will never allow you to be tried above your strength. Be assured of it, the alarm we sometimes feel at undertaking offices of importance arises not unfrequently from self-love and pusillanimity. Do imitate St. Teresa and *spit at the devil*, who is trying to terrify you. The arch-enemy knows your weak point and assails it. In the Holy Name, then, tell him to begone. Believe me, by trying to combat this point of self-love you will please the Divine Majesty more than by fasts and austerities. Some penance we must all do. In the name of Him who has called us to honour Him, take up the spiritual armour spoken of by St. Paul, and proclaim against the enemies you have renounced in baptism—the devil, the world, and the flesh—that you will fight the battle stoutly. The flesh is our own *self-love;* the world, in our regard as religious, is, for the most part, *human respect;* and the hoof of the wicked one, the tail of the serpent, will ever be discovered by the lowly-minded who petition with the Church for a *right understanding*."

This "right understanding" she was perpetually urging her children to pray for, and it passed into a household word in the congregation.

Perhaps this constant prayer was the feeder of the common sense which has characterised so many of its members.

As the sisters were occasionally transferred from one convent to another, it sometimes became necessary for Mrs. Aikenhead to give the superior of a house to which a sister was about to be sent, a clear idea of the character she would have to deal with, and general directions as to her own line of conduct. In one case of this kind, after speaking of a sister who, possibly, had not got on very well in one of the houses, and was being placed under the care of another rectress, the Rev. Mother continues :—

"I hope this poor child is not as much in fault as appears. But be up to the enemy, and look quietly and sharply into all. Treat her with patient forbearance. M. Lucy found that in moments of softening she opened her mind at times more freely than at others. Take care of the illusions of zeal and do not condemn quickly. Even when you are certain, exercise charity and patience, remembering that each is as yourself a chosen spouse of Christ, each most dear to his sacred heart who gave not way to indignation at the perfidy of Judas, neither did He rebuke St. Peter when he denied Him with any word or tone of anger—nor did the saint lose his place in that loving heart. Our duty is to be like the Good Shepherd in the very parable taught us by his own sacred words. We must support [those] who are weak, bind up the wounds and fractures of our flock, even before they complain of the pain brought on by their own folly. Recollect the words of the catechism as to the effect of original sin, and be assured that whilst fervour and good example prosper in a community each will assist the other to fight against those sad effects of sin which each of us experiences in one way or the other. I grieve at what I fear exists of weakness. Pray, and encourage all to pray with St. Augustine for self-knowledge. Our wish to know God and all his perfections will never be so effectual as in the humble soul who really does in a sort know her own vileness and tries to hate the sin she discovers to have reigned in herself. If we have honourable feelings, with great love of truth—who bestowed on us these preventing graces? Assuredly they are good dispositions, but sometimes with them is sadly mixed up secret pride; and at times persons thus endowed by God are very faulty in contempt of others. Let us creep low—otherwise how shall we avoid all the mesh of snares with which we are surrounded in this world of sin where Satan holds his horrid throne, and is so busy in sending forth his emissaries. We must try to keep the domestic traitor *self* in tight chains. So do study and practise Father Rodriguez's excellent lessons. Indeed I hope no one with you passes even one day without a lecture in the "Christian and Religious Perfection." The custom of laying it aside even for two days in the week is not quite right for any under five years of reading it. All with you are juniors, so I wish no such custom. They will have time at odds and ends, when a second lecture can be, either together or of a Sunday or holiday. Tell me how it is."

Writing to a superior in the country to whom a young lay-sister had been sent, Mrs. Aikenhead says :—

"I am anxious to hear that poor M. C. is getting at home with you. Her disposition is peculiar, but I am fixed in the impression that she is

amiable and has a better claim to the character of being a good religious than many. She is exceedingly timid, and requires to meet with kindness of manner, but this I aver, that her *timidity* is *real*. With many this appearance proceeds from pride. I do not tell you not to find fault with her, but I just observe that once you have told her when she is in error or ought to act otherwise, you should be careful to make the best of the matter, for if she see you fretted by any fault of hers, or appearing to resent it, this will depress her, and then she will become more trying to you, and unhappy herself. A superior ought to try rather to be loved than feared. Find fault and leave it there. . . . . Each superior should remember that it is as a shepherd she is to imitate our Divine Model. The weak are to be supported, the wounded to be solaced, the weary to be refreshed, the tempted to be withdrawn sweetly from the danger. Now, do not suppose that I have anything special in my mind in your regard. Believe me, if I heard [of] any one matter which I wished amended I should fairly and plainly tell you."

Mrs. Aikenhead's letters at this time of her life were not by any means invariably filled with subject matter of so very serious an import. They were, on the contrary, like those of an earlier period, full of variety and highly characteristic of herself. From the most important questions she would glance away to some trifling matter, and talk about bacon, or candles, or stockings, or checked calico. The following letter treats of a medical prescription; of the duty of taking care of health and maintaining cheerfulness; of circumspection in dealing with others; and of other matters:—

"My dearest M. R- —.

. . . . I regret that the recipe which you desire could not be sent. It seems Mr. O'F. did not *write* but mentioned the proportions. We will not lose sight of you in this point, and if I can I shall send some powders made up with the recipe. Meantime I entreat you to be attentive in two points—diet and taking sufficient rest. Now pray be a right religious and take every care of yourself that you would of another: no foolish scrupulosities, no splitting of hairs, or 'perhaps I do not require this or that,' &c., &c. Beg of God to direct you, take *simply* the good-natured suggestions of others, I mean of course such as are obviously reasonable, and be on your guard to keep your mind cheerful. This will improve *temper*, and so will a moderate care of health. . . . . Pray and practise patience—even towards yourself. Amen.

"I did indeed thank our good God for what you mention of the kind interest you experienced from Dr. B——. I think you did not at all err in point of prudence, and I hope your confidence in him will prove to be a support to you. I suppose from your silence on the point that Rev. Mr. C—— is not returned. Be sure to take all with coolness. Be grateful for favours, but don't suppose yourself to be required to sacrifice the well-being, or even the supposed advantage of the congregation or of the house in which you are superior, to any degree of over-strained obligation.

". . . . We marked the sewed-up flannel to prevent hasty opening; so I hope the bottles of *Eau de Cologne* will go safe, also the little pots of lip salve. Sincerely do I wish success to your repository, but truly I am not sanguine; only it is well to *prove* our good will to make a penny. But *time* is more precious to us than any profit from our little traffics. They are to be gone on with, but no solicitude! As to employing any woman to

go about *selling*, I am sure you would in the end lose by such an effort, and the articles would be injured. God bless you and direct you in all. I beg love and blessing to all. We are all on the mend and ever so busy,

"Yours affectionately in J. C.

"M. A."

It may be well to observe that in the convents of the Sisters of Charity it is customary to have a glass-case or cabinet filled with books, scapulars, medals, fancy work and other articles for sale. This is called the repository. Evidently the *Eau de Cologne* and the pots of lip salve above referred to were destined to furnish out one of these little depots. As a matter of course, when a bazaar was about to be held for the benefit of any of the institutions, Mrs. Aikenhead was highly interested in the preparations, and eager to give help; though after a time she found it necessary to discontinue having the sisters employed in working for these bazaars. Her determination in this matter is referred to in a letter to Cork, replying to one in which a request was made for a further supply of dolls dressed as Highlanders —those already sent having been greatly admired, and counted on as a profitable feature:—

"I am truly glad," says the Rev. Mother, "that the dolls were so much approved of. It will not be difficult, I hope, to procure as many as you desire—M. A. says five. Now, in case the Highlanders cannot be *matched* (you may observe that the gentleman's legs are wax and the lady's arms ditto) will you still desire five dressed dolls? I regret your being quite under a mistake as to our own sisters having dressed the dolls. I paid for dressing them, and the six sent down cost in all—dolls and dressing—two pounds. Just say your wish as to number, &c., at this or similar cost, and they shall be got. With you I entirely agree that Mrs. MacS——'s and Mrs. L——'s wish to have such dolls as Mrs. B—— has got ought to be most willingly complied with. And I never did see better dressed or nicer dolls for any of our bazaars, and you are, or will be wise in going to some expense, as so much less falls on you than ever did on us here. Wonders have been undertaken for you certainly. I am very glad of the postponement to Easter week. The season will be certainly better suited, and I hope all will be successful. I have some very pretty reticules, and shall have some purses made by our own. But, my dear, we could not have furnished any of our own work, had not some articles been commenced for a bazaar this time three years which never took place. Perhaps I did not mention to you that on that occasion I was seriously recommended entirely to give up holding bazaars. The working came for the four previous years to fall entirely on our sisters, and I am well convinced that health was injured. Some of our dear and most useful ones are very energetic, and the labour of the business with the anxiety and responsibility certainly were too much. So my conscientious duty was clearly developed, and with the divine blessing I resolved, under advice, to take care of health for promoting the divine honour in the proper functions of our vocation. Whilst ladies act as freely and effectually as at present all is well; but this will not last, you may be assured. I am glad indeed that you have some articles and works from us, as we had the name (very correctly) of working so much for former bazaars. But now this is over. Indeed with such weighty undertakings our novices cannot possibly be ever again employed in that way."

Mrs. Aikenhead thus *au courant* with the various works and undertakings of her different communities was also well aware of their many little wants. Her efforts to supply these cost her no small trouble occasionally, and great would be her satisfaction when she could put up a trifle from time to time in a little old leather purse she kept by her for these special savings. "There is a saying," she writes, "amongst honest folk, I learned it in my very early days in poor old Munster, that poor people must have poor weddings—and so it is with us, my dear." Sometimes the required sum would be nearly amassed when a greater need in another quarter became known to her, and the little treasure should then be appropriated in a way that was not at first contemplated. A certain rectress was anxious to have some turkeys for her poultry-yard, and Mrs. Aikenhead, after long waiting, sends her two pounds for the purchase, together with the following little note:—

"Well, my dear, after putting up a pound or so, and that even by shillings, in the hopes of keeping my promise anent the turkeys, circumstances required me to take out the wee gathering from the old purse to make up an urgent call; and this being often repeated I could not get my intention fulfilled during October. My illness interrupted my intention during the last fortnight; but better late than never, and Almighty Providence has now given me the power which I almost gave up the hope of at this side of Christmas. So now, dear, if it be over-late for turkeys help yourself in any other little way with the £2 I enclose, and may our Lord add His powerful blessing. Amen! Amen!"

Here is a characteristic letter *á propos* of a cow that was badly wanted by a rural community:—

"Your dear note to mother-assistant was sent out to me here yesterday after one o'clock, and assuredly the want of the *needful* when so much depended on your getting a lady cow made me sad. Well, my dear, I told you we had *very evident* particular sorts of miraculous supplies betimes. Very soon after, but not in time for our post, which you know goes out at three o'clock sharp, arrived a little bit of cash—really and truly neither at all due, nor at all expected or calculated on by the sister to whom it was sent. You may judge how my heart danced, at least to a slow measure, perhaps a *minuet*—for the quick motion of a jig such as Nora Creena would not at all become so grave and rev. an old nun as poor self. Now *Deo Gratias*, and 100 amens. Don't make a bad use of my secret miracles by expecting them too often, but be very good, and pray a great deal. I hope to hear of a Mistress Blackberry or a Mistress Daisy being added to your dairy soon. I hope it may be the latter as I have always understood the red cows to be the best milkers."

In Mrs. Aikenhead's voluminous correspondence we find how lovingly she noted anniversaries as they occurred, and how particularly she kept saints' days. She often wrote her letters on the festival of one of her friends among the saints, or posted them so as to be

received on the feast. St. Patrick was sure to be remembered on the 17th of March, with aspirations for "our own poor Ireland." The festival of "our holy father, St. Ignatius," would suggest an inspiriting homily on "those holy rules we derive from him through the great mercy of God in our regard." As St. Augustine's feast came round she would beg for prayers, and all her admiration for the convert saint, whose words were constantly on her lips, would find expression in a letter to some absent child and friend. "This line is to prove," she says to one of her correspondents, "that I am very anxious not to keep you in suspense—and you know it is quite natural for a poor old beggar like me to look very graciously and be very civil just in order to make quite sure of your ladyship's bountiful alms for St. Augustine's feast." And to another she writes: "Oh! that I had one spark of my dear patron's holy penitential love of God! Do, dear child, try to love your heavenly Spouse whilst you are young. The heart grows hard and chilly with old folk, unless like this glorious penitent they set the fire strong and lasting whilst youth is in its freshness—then years will not diminish the steady flame. Alas! alas! I thought I should have effected this in my youthful days, and truly, my dear child, I feel that I have failed. So take warning, and pray for yours affectionately in Christ.—M. A." Another saint to whom she had always a particular devotion was Mary Magdalen, whose intercession she invoked for the grace of perfect contrition and perfect love. Nor must we omit from the list St. Teresa, of whom she kept a memorial always on her desk.

But it was not alone the memory of her own favourite saints that she cherished; she was anxious that each sister's patron should be honoured; and would insist that on this point as on others the spirit of universality and of true charity should be cultivated. Her wishes on this subject are fully expressed in the following passages from her letters:—

"Thanks to our heavenly Father for all His mercies! I do not forget that this very day, 29th October, is [the feast of] the patron of your diocese. May he be a patron to our dear Lady's poor little priory, and its beloved inhabitants; to each of whom my most cordial remembrance, praying that each may deserve every best blessing. One word which I tried to urge lately with others of our dear rectresses I am anxious to recommend also to you. It is that you will all try to teach our dear sisters to make special acquaintance, as much as possible, with the patrons and patronesses assigned for each new sister, and to refresh the pious memory of the same about the time of their recurring festivals. This, as I conceive, will produce, or at least keep alive, that union and charity which ought to reign amongst us, and this by the very recommendation of the constitutions; so let us try to establish the practical observance of what I suggest. From our numbers we are obliged to assign names for designation, to which it may be that the sisters themselves may not feel any special devotion. Sister Mary Albeus bears the name of the patron of the Archbishopric of Cashel, whence she

comes. You will find the life short but very interesting in Butler, 12th September. Emly is the diocese, it is united to Cashel. He was at least cotemporary with St. Patrick. Sister M. Hyacinth—her feast is the 16th of August. St. Hyacinth is a real patron for a Sister of Charity, eminently zealous, a missioner of the first class—the first who was professed in the holy Dominican Order by St. Dominic himself. St. Lewis Bertrand, 9th of October, is the patron of our dear little Sister Mary L——, now called Sister M. Lewis. His is a very practical life as you will observe.

"The 20th of May is St. Bernardine's Day. Pray for our sister of that name—also for Miss C——; it is one of her baptismal names, and she says she must be very devout *now* to the saint, for she never knew before what a beautiful patron he is for a Sister of Charity. Read the life *with observation* and you will see it. Next week comes St. Philip Neri—and then St. Anthony —pray for the sisters who bear their names. Ask the sisters to do so too, and try to make them see the fitness of these saints as patrons for us. This instructs the mind, and will help to make [them] *not enthusiastic* (and sometimes, I fear, sinfully so) about *one* or *two* particular saints."

In the same spirit she was careful to interest the sisters in the work of other houses besides the one they themselves might happen to be more particularly engaged in. The hospital nuns were not to nurse the idea that doctoring the poor was the foremost of all works. The nuns of the schools were not to cultivate any bookish notions about the pre-eminence of their vocation. The nuns of the metropolitan laundry were not to set too high a value on washing. Town convents should not look on provincial houses as country cousins. As they were all ruled by the one head, so should they all be animated with the one spirit. Fortunately she had that vital power of willing, and effecting what she willed, which enabled her to transfuse a truly fraternal spirit throughout her well-organised government. With this view, too, it may be supposed certain customs were framed which had a tendency to widen sympathy and expand the mental vision. Writing to one of her children she says :—

"May each commemoration of your holy profession find you more truly and inviolably the holy spouse of Him whose love and Almighty power has so mercifully elected us to this high station! When you say Amen! do, my dear child, include poor, tepid, worn-out *me*. The more of us who are faithful and fervent, the less will the arch-enemy be able to subvert or injure the truly great institutions which the Almighty Providence has raised up for us and entrusted to our care. Each and all of our foundations are of importance even greater than we are aware of according to poor *limited* human calculations; but let us hope and mutually pray that each and all of us may deserve to be supernaturally enlightened to see and understand the full value of our holy vocation—as also to understand clearly the dependence of each branch of our congregation on the others, so as that prayer may be zealous for all. This *Catholic* spirit should be cultivated: and let no sister ever suppose her own employ either to be less important or less holy than that of her sisters of the congregation; and on the other hand, let none of us reckon on being more elevated by our more apparently useful or even spiritual employs. All, all are the service of Him to whom our lives and entire being ought to be gratefully devoted, ever bearing in mind

that we are redeemed by His own blood on the cross. Pray for me, dear sister, that I may love that holy cross in the full spirit of our holy 11th Summary; this is our only profitable study, be assured."

Nothing comes out more fully in her correspondence than her faith in prayer and her devotion to its exercise. In great things and in small she turns to prayer, and she is always begging the prayers of others. Her letters, as she herself once said, are like litanies, for *pray, pray,* ends every sentence. Her blessings were most comprehensive. "May every blessing," she would say, "be with and around and after you." The "amen," which so often comes in like a chorus to finish a paragraph, had with her a special significance. It was a constant aspiration of her own, and was meant to concentrate in a word all the holy desires of her heart and commend them to God—"Amen! oh, amen!" those about her would hear her ejaculate with the utmost fervour. It was also used as a chiming in with the prayers and praises of the angels and all the friends of God in heaven and on earth. "Amen! Often, my child, say that holy word fervently, and pray say it for me as often as you can," was one of the little advices and requests which she would address to her children. A great joy it was to her to know that the Sisters of Charity were remembered by pious souls and had a share in the prayers of religious communities. Having spoken in one of her letters of the illness of some of the most useful of her nuns, she thus continues :—

"But we must cast all our care on the Lord. All, all the prayers and good works of which I can avail myself are, as the first intention offered that each and all of our dear congregation may glorify God by being true and genuine observers of this virtue of entire confidence and of perfect conformity. In these will, I believe, be found the highest perfection. I must tell you that quite spontaneously we have had assurance of holy aid from two very edifying communities early this year. In one, the superioress had assigned for the Sisters of Charity all the prayers and good works of an entire fortnight. In that very fervent community are upwards of fifty good religious. In the second community are also upwards of fifty. We have established unions of prayer and good works with dear old York, now in all its renewed increase of numbers and holiness; with the congregation of Hospitaliers of St. Thomas; and with that of the real Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent. Now as I have great comfort from thinking of these holy unions I tell you of them. Those two first-mentioned are English communities. One word: Let *all* your intentions include 'those who are thus united to us.' I think you know we are in union with the Dominican Order and also formally with the Society of Jesus: this last obtained for us by the present Father Provincial of the English province, Father Lythgoe. And it is because I feel deeply the urgent necessity of the aid of prayer that I am comforted by it. Often I think that nothing short of a miracle, nay, many miracles, can set all to a right position in the very *one* point of supplying our already founded houses with efficient subjects."

It is not surprising that, valuing this aid in prayer as she did, Mrs.

Aikenhead should be particularly careful that all the founders, friends, and benefactors of her institutions should have a large share in the suffrages of her own congregation. She laid down strict rules concerning the duty of praying for benefactors; and she constantly reminded the rectresses of the different houses to see that nothing was neglected on that head. In a letter to Waterford she enters fully into the subject:

✠ "*The Sisters of Charity, St. Mary's, Harold's Cross,*
"*Dublin, 29th December,* 1849.

"My dear Mother Rectress,

. . . . "I earnestly hope, and it ought to be the subject of constant, fervent prayer that the steps taken by our true friends will with the divine blessing be followed up, and something of a permanent foundation be at least attempted. Could even a few hundreds be invested the fund would grow even by small degrees, and even a small sum of regularly paid interest from public securities would give all concerned (even our benefactors themselves) an increase of that necessary interest in the foundation from which courage in an undertaking proceeds.

"Now let us all bear in mind that the more constant and fervent our prayers for benefactors, both living and dead, shall be, the more firm may be our dependence on an increase of benefactors. We are bound to be faithful in this exercise of grateful charity towards every benefactor of every house and mission of the congregation; also towards every individual who contributes to support the charitable institutions of every sort under the care of our sisters in various places; and to make all clearly understood under this head of 'charitable institutions,' we are to understand distinctly every collection made in each house of ours for *the sick and indigent.* Now, dear child, recollect this yourself, and from time to time renew the memory of it in all; besides not allowing any occasion to pass of impressing this duty of prayer and good works in behalf of *all* and every benefactor, either living or departed, of the entire congregation and its works. Assuredly our founders and benefactors of Our Blessed Lady of Charity, Lady-lane, Waterford, have large demands on the congregation at large; and all the members appointed to reside in that convent and have care of the poor attached to its foundation, have a most especial share of the duty to fulfil. May *we all* be faithful. Amen.

"I forwarded your letter to dear mother-assistant immediately on receipt, and I find the messenger has brought a hurried line of enjoyment of all the good you report.

"I was led to the little *remembrancer* of my first pages by your mentioning your intention of performing our semestrial duty of holy renovation next week, and indeed all the duties towards benefactors also may be fitly expounded during that holy time. We must pray for you and all, that our heavenly Father may be merciful in blessing all endeavours sincerely made by each.—A. M. D. G. Amen! Amen!

"With love to each, ever my dear Magdalen R——,

"Yours affectionately in J. C.

"M. A."

In a word, the prayers for benefactors were then, and have ever since continued to be, almost incessant. Besides the daily prayers

offered for this intention there are special prayers appointed to be said each week by certain of the sisters named in rotation. Masses and communions are regularly offered for the same intention.

And, if it be a duty of gratitude to pray for benefactors, it surely is no less a duty of charity to pray for each member of the congregation, and for all God's creatures. "We are all bound to pray for each other," she says. "If my petitions are too tepid to obtain increased aids for any of you, I hope *your charity* in my behalf will have done more for you than my imperfect efforts." And again: "Truly, my dear, we ought always to try to unite ourselves with all who pray. We know not at what moment the prayer of a pious soul may be offering for us in our various trials. And remember that we also are bound to pray for all God's creatures. By this constant exercise we shall obtain all the graces promised to the charitable and the merciful."

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## CHAPTER II.

### FAMILY AFFAIRS—PUBLIC EVENTS—PROGRESS IN CORK.

MRS. AIKENHEAD'S correspondence was a laborious work, and like St. Teresa she was nearly "ground to powder" with writing letters. The number of long, well-written, properly begun and properly ended letters which she got through during the years she was invalided must have been beyond counting. There are about 1,500 collected and preserved in the mother-house. And we must not fancy her sitting secluded in a library and comfortably getting through her correspondence. She enjoyed no such leisure. The nuns were always coming to her about important matters; and there were sure to be novices flitting about in their white veils, for this she liked; and then, although St. Mary's at Harold's Cross was not so much in the world's gangway as St. Vincent's, a great many visitors did make their way to the country mansion. All were shown up to the Mother's room, if she were not able to accomplish the descent of an easy flight of stairs with the aid of an attendant: for indeed there were few asking to see Mrs. Aikenhead who had not some pretence of business with her; and who could tell whether these few might not, like Abraham's guests, be angels in disguise?

She was so anxious too that everything should be rightly done, that she took on herself a great deal of trouble which others would willingly have spared her. For instance, she often supervised the housekeeping department, for she was most anxious that the sisters

should have what was necessary to support their health and strength for the labours of charity, and she took care that the food should be of good quality, and cooked in such a way as to be wholesome and palatable. An intimate friend of the Rev. Mother made a playful remark to her one day about having arrived at the convent door at the same time that a well-filled market-basket was carried in. "My dear," said Mrs. Aikenhead, "an empty sack can't stand. *We* have to work:"—a popular way of expressing the dictum of St. Ignatius of Loyola on the same subject. Even the Christmas plum-puddings were brought under her notice. She should get a slice from each of the Dublin houses to judge if the pudding had been compounded according to the most approved receipt. It was so likewise in the matter of bedding and wearing apparel. The flannels and blankets supplied for the clothing and beds should always be submitted to her inspection: not lest they should be too expensive, but lest, while due care was paid to the spirit of religious poverty, they should not be good enough; and she would sometimes examine a sister's dress to see that she was clothed with suitable attention to health. Her own experience taught her that it was very mistaken economy to overtask one's natural strength, and she often warned those under her authority to take all necessary precautions. Writing to a superior who was suffering from the effects of overwork, she says:—

"My dear Mother Rectress,

"Most truly have I been feeling for you all that you say, and more than you say. No one can more clearly understand the effects of over-exertion than I can. And indeed I am always glad to find our dear mothers and sisters rather obliged to yield and take rest. My own great power of bodily exertion, even when suffering very much from fatigue, has been the source of infirmities from which I must be willing to suffer whilst our Lord is pleased to leave me in this life."

No matter how pre-occupied, she was always accessible, always sympathetic and helpful. She was quick in discovering when things were not going on well, and prompt in divising a simple and effective remedy. "I remember," says one of her children, "that some months after I entered the noviceship I was suffering a good deal of annoyance about money matters. Executors were not paying interest at the time I expected and in the way I had named to Rev. Mother. My family had nothing to do with this disappointment; they felt with me, but could not help me; and it went hard against my poor pride to be living a burden on the community. I did not express this feeling to anybody, but the thought was continually in my mind. When on two or three occasions I had to speak to our dear Rev. Mother on this business matter, I only spoke of the facts and bearings of the case as I understood them, and did not allude to my foolish

feelings with regard to the awkward position I found myself in. This was the state of affairs when one morning Rev. Mother sent for me, and after a little cheery conversation said: 'Sister M. A., now that you are clothed, I have been thinking that it is time for you to be earning your bread. Sister superintendent wants aid in the House of Refuge, and you can be very useful to her.' I was delighted to hear this. Rev. Mother spoke on, giving me some outline of what my duties were to be, and not seeming to notice much the effect her communication produced: till at last she looked straight in my face so affectionately and at the same time with an arch expression in her beautiful eyes, and said: 'You see now in spite of trustees and executors you can earn your bit wherever you are — ay, and be worth your keeping too!' She then held out her hand and pressed mine very kindly, for she saw she had touched the sore; and with a truly maternal blessing dismissed me to my duties. Many a long year has passed since this little incident took place; and still the remembrance of her generous kindness, so judiciously and delicately exercised, wakes up all my feelings of love and gratitude towards her."

"About the same period," continues the sister, "an excellent fellow-novice had many difficulties of various kinds. A host of affectionate relatives were grieved at her leaving them, and her warm heart felt much on their account. Her duties also were often a source of trial—even those duties which bring most consolation: I mean spiritual duties—she took them so terribly to heart. We, the novices, were making our annual retreat, during which our dear Rev. Mother gave us instructions twice each day. I remember one day in particular this dear and truly good sister was in a state of trouble and over-anxiety which she could not entirely control; and when we assembled in Rev. Mother's room for instruction she sloped into a corner to escape notice. The instruction was given as usual and for the usual length of time; and when just concluded, Rev. Mother said: 'It must be two o'clock, although I have not heard the clock strike.' We told her the clock was not striking—that it was out of order. (I strongly suspect that was not the first moment she became aware of the fact.) 'Oh, that must be looked to at once,' she exclaimed; and then she called to her by name—the sister I have alluded to; and, ignoring the red eyes and distressed countenance, said: 'You have a strong arm; have the charity to let an old cripple lean on you.' And then, as she rose from the sofa, pressing the sister's arm very closely to her, she said, as they walked across the room out to the lobby where the clock was: 'Now, child, you are a support to your mother.' And it was not difficult to discern in the movement which of the two was in a sense receiving and which imparting most support. But that was not all: before the clock was wound and

settled she had with cordial words of comfort restored, for the time being, peace to that troubled heart."

To the lay sisters she was particularly kind and cordial. If they were ill or recovering from illness she was all concern lest they should be in the least degree overlooked. "I have my bell," she used to say, "and there is no fear of my being forgotten; and if I am, I can ring it; and so can other superiors. But these poor sisters depend entirely on us." And then she would give directions for special care of them. One whose delicacy of health made it difficult for her to stand long, had directions to sit down whenever she came into the Rev. Mother's presence, whether desired or not, each time. The moment summer appeared, she would begin planning to get this the invalid child of hers early to the country. "I will do my best," she would say, "to send you soon." This sister being of a timid disposition the Rev. Mother made every effort to gain her confidence and banish the sense of restraint. She would talk of her own early childhood and the members of her family; and when speaking of her mother, she would say: "That is *your* grandmother you know!" And in the same way Anne and Margaret Aikenhead were spoken of as if they were the sister's aunts.

The Rev. Mother's sister Margaret, who has just been mentioned, lost early in life her husband, Dr. Hickson. She and her three children were a source of the deepest interest to Mrs. Aikenhead, whose sisterly affection never cooled, and who was a truly loving aunt to John Hickson and his sisters Mary and Ellie. The boy grew up and entered the Austrian military service. After some years Mrs. Hickson longing to see her son, the young officer who had out-grown his strength and required care, made up her mind to undertake a journey to Vienna in company with her sister-in-law Miss Hickson, and to remain for a time on the Continent. How anxiously the Rev. Mother's thoughts followed the travellers, may be judged from a passage in the letter we now give, which was written to the mother-assistant, Mrs. MacCarthy, then staying at Preston:—

✠ "*The Sisters of Charity, St. Mary's Mount,*
"*Harold's Cross, Dublin, 10th August,* 1846.

"DEAREST F. MAGDALEN,

"I hope that by writing in time for the early mail of to-morrow, I may by your own assistance get a line to poor Margaret ere she leaves London. You, I judge, will know her address, and I do not. My message is not of what may be called material importance. However, I wish to say to her that I entreat for a few lines at least from the principal places through which she will pass—Antwerp certainly; and that when she writes either to Mrs. Cathur or the Rev. J. O'Donoghue she will request of them to give me ever so short a line of report. Of course I cannot but be anxious to learn progress in the case of travellers so truly inexperienced,

and, alas! solely dependent on their poor selves, as Eliza and Margaret. May they both seek sincerely and find paternal providence from the Father of the poor, the widow, and the orphan! You will, I depend, give Amen to my petition.

"I hope that my report of dear M. C—— being laid up will not unduly alarm you. Thanks to our heavenly Father all is better with her, as I am assured—the pain in the knee quite relieved—this from good authority. Mary Elizabeth drove hither after speaking to O'Ferrall at St. Vincent's, who says that with care she will soon be herself. I say 'all that is left of her,' but assuredly this same remainder is too truly precious not to hold great, great value. M. E. told us that she had been in M. C.'s room and found her on her little couch, ever so busy directing and assisting a little in cutting out shirts for St. Patrick's ward. . . . I am enjoying being able to tell you that I am really (T. G.) as well as if no fatigue occurred last week. M. Lucy with blisters, and on bread and milk diet, but about and doing her usual business. We have cool weather and very delightful—not without an exercise of holy conformity in seeing our most thriving crop of early potatoes hanging down their hitherto luxuriant stalks: a wretched, shrivelled, scorched mass, and the potatoes not eatable under any blighted stalk. We are of course getting all taken up, and will send amongst our town houses any that are fit for table. The late crops continue to look healthy, but you know these will not be ripe (if they are spared) until the end of September or October.

"As to politics, I am told, and I think by the best authority, that actually and truly the great O'Connell is at the very head of influence with the present Government, and all Ireland is meeting in all the towns, addressing and proclaiming unshaken confidence. A Mastership in Chancery has been conferred on our neighbour and benefactor of St. Vincent's, J. J. Murphy, Esq.—a Cork man, my dear! And O'Connell member for Cork—ergo, *all* Cork men are to become high and mighty. Certainly our poor country is rather in the state of a whirligig.

"I shall greatly enjoy a letter when you have the moments to write. But try to become a good intercessor, and come home to us with great store of sanctity. Amen! You know that all you can tell me of what is good and happy around you, and especially the two dear sisters, but still more specially that which will give comfort to their hearts, the well-being of dear, holy, and respected Rev. Mother will be of entire interest. May our Lord bless you, dearest child. Pray for yours ever and affectionately in J. C.

"M. A."

While Mrs. Hickson was in Austria taking care of her son, her daughter Ellie, who had been placed for her education under the care of the nuns at Princethorp, became alarmingly delicate. Symptoms of hip joint disease were discovered, and it was feared that consumption might set in. When this became known to Mrs. Aikenhead, she resolved to take charge of the child herself and to put her under Dr. O'Ferrall's care in St. Vincent's hospital. Accordingly, the little patient arrived in Ireland and was settled in Stephen's-green, where she had a room in the convent part of the institution and was domesticated with the nuns. At first there seemed good reason to hope she might recover; everything that skill could suggest was tried to check the disease; and for an interval the pain and bad

symptoms abated. That her education might not suffer by her residence in the hospital one of the sisters took charge of her studies. She was quite a pet, and it was no wonder, for she was a rare character: sweet and sympathetic, lively, talented, and pious. She resembled her aunt, though her features were more delicate than the Rev. Mother's. After a while change of air was recommended, and Ellie was brought out to Our Lady's Mount. While there she was often carried down stairs in the evening to take tea in the Rev. Mother's room. It was thought that if her life was spared she would become a Sister of Charity. But God took her to heaven by another way. After many months of treatment she went home on her mother's return from the Continent; lingered a while longer; and died when about fourteen years of age.

While little Ellie was still with the nuns, the year of revolution, 1848, arrived, and brought trouble even into the convent. Mrs. Aikenhead writes:—

"I am of course very anxious about Margaret and Eliza. Since the awful reports of the serious upsets of all Europe I have not had any news of them, and wonder that M. does not write. Perhaps private letters may be subject to interruption, yet the mails seem to travel with great celerity, and truly awful news they bring! Knowing Margaret's and Eliza's feelings I fear they suffer much, as John must, I suppose, be liable to be sent about with the army. I must write a word of inquiry whether Mrs. Cather knows any more than I do. . . . As to the state of public excitement in Dublin, no one not on the spot can easily imagine it. Nor do we hear much; but truly enough to alarm any one who can remember '98 and 1803. But all we have to do is to pray that peace may be preserved, otherwise property will be destroyed, and what is worse the lives of thousands will be lost. We hear of many apprehensions, but our part is to pray and be as silent as we can."

In another letter she thus alludes to the days of awful visitation which had come upon the world:—

"We know very little of public news, but enough to assure us of very bad goings on in Italy, especially in Rome, whence it is reported that the Holy Father has been obliged to abscond. I hope all with you continue faithful and fervent in prayer, as in duty bound, for his Holiness in the first instance, he being now in a state of danger and of great affliction; for the holy Church which must feel the present state of its visible Head; and for all the world, especially our own depressed dear Ireland. The prayer called of the Bishop of Jerusalem we ought to recite frequently for our own souls, it is beautiful; and for all the States of Christendom—for all are in trial and turmoil. Charity demands our constant petitions, so pray, and do not faint: that is pray with longanimity."[1]

[1] The prayer of the Bishop of Jerusalem is as follows:—"O Jesus Christ, we call upon Thee. Holy and immortal God, have mercy upon us, and upon all sinners. Purify us by Thy holy Blood; pardon us by Thy holy Blood; save us by Thy holy Blood, now and for evermore. Amen.'

Sometimes her heart was made doubly sorrowful when dear friends of her own, and generous benefactors of the poor under the care of her congregation, were sufferers in the calamities of the times. A great affliction had befallen Mr. Meagher, the brother-in-law of "dear Sister Christian," and the kind friend of the Sisters of Charity in Waterford. His son, Thomas Francis, having become implicated in the insurrectionary movement of 1848, vainly endeavoured to get away to some foreign country.[1] He was arrested, tried for high-treason and condemned to death. The sentence was commuted to transportation for life; but to the old man was lost for ever the son of whom he was so proud.

"We have just been informed by our good friend O'Farrell," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "that Tom Francis made one of the most powerful and touching addresses that ever has been pronounced. How very grievous that so much real talent must be taken from our poor country. Of course our feelings must be deeply engaged for his poor father, but he is making steady strides towards the kingdom of the Eternal. May we strive to keep on the same holy path. The footsteps have been marked by the Redeemer, and assuredly we have no lack of sufficient aid from on high; but we must *feel* all that is painful to poor, weak nature patiently, and as willingly as we can. And this point gives me quite sufficient exercise of all the virtues—for it is difficult to be assured that holy conformity is complete whilst important sources of solicitude press weightily. So pray: that is, let us unite in praying and trying to practise. Amen."

Truly, as she remarked elsewhere, those were days not calculated to allow much elation of heart in any walk of life. The pressure of calamity on Ireland was indeed excessive; famine and pestilence had counted their victims by the thousand, and a ceaseless migration to "that other Ireland beyond the sea" appeared to threaten the complete depopulation of the ancient home of the Gaelic race.[2] It were no wonder if despondency should overshadow minds of a certain calibre and benumb all effort. But, to yield even in a passing moment to discouragement was in Mrs. Aikenhead's opinion an unworthy act; and, in the case of a Sister of Charity, argued a defect in that enduring and heroic love which should be the note of her vocation. "Beware

[1] "It was said that the father of Thomas Francis Meagher—a wealthy Waterford merchant, who greatly deplored 'Tom's' rebellious politics—employed four brigantines to cruise off the southern and western coasts to facilitate his escape."—"New Ireland," vol. i., p. 202.

[2] In 1846 the number of emigrants from Ireland amounted to 105,955. More than double that number left the shores of the famine-stricken land in the succeeding year. The first desire of these poor exiles was to help in their distress, or to get out to the land of plenty, those of their kindred whom they had left behind. In 1848 sums of money were remitted to Ireland for these purposes to the amount of £460,000; while in 1852, the sum transmitted rose to £1,404,000. Considerably more than seven millions sterling were thus sent as contributions, or in the form of prepaid passages, in the course of the seven years from 1848 to 1854. (See Report of the Census Commissioners for 1851, pp. 243-244.)

of allowing any illusions to encourage you, or any around you, in despondency," she once wrote. "The glory of God can be promoted by ways unknown to us; and even our own sins should not lead a Christian to despair. Low spirits and dread of evil to ourselves or congregation, or even to the Church, are actually the beginning of despair. If all the rest of the world goes wrong we should still persevere in trying to serve God with faith and fervour—trying to imitate Him who came to be our model."

While thus keeping up her own courage with great thoughts, and animating those around her by the inculcation of the highest Christian principles, she did not neglect to use the secondary means which common sense suggested for keeping up the tone of the mind in adverse and gloomy circumstances. A good book proved now, as of old, a good friend; and like Mrs. Aikenhead's other simple recipes was often prescribed, when the general outlook was gloomy and the moral atmosphere charged with danger. One of the novices having fallen into low spirits about herself while invalided at St. Vincent's, Mrs. Aikenhead was much concerned, and wrote instructions to her correspondent in the hospital, desiring that this sister whose lacework was something very superior, as she had heard, should be provided with materials for making cuffs or collars, or any light affair she might fancy—nothing in a frame however, lest her chest, which was delicate, should suffer from stooping. "And then," continues Mrs. Aikenhead, "pray make out in my book-case (I think) a large work, 'History of the Crusades.' It is unbound. Give her the first volume. You can say I recommend it as interesting. Then *I* want, if you please, 'The History of the Knights of Malta,' *Vertot*. There are five volumes or six, gather them for me." The Rev. Mother's little library of history, antiquities, and general literature not having been removed from the hospital to her country mansion, some of the works were thus brought out as she required them. She liked to have her favourites at hand, and appears to have been lonely without the "Knights of Malta."

All through those years, from the cessation of the cholera to 1848, the Sisters of Charity in Cork had been labouring indefatigably, and making sure, if not swift, progress. They had difficulties enough to contend against, and trials not a few to endure, but the courage of the devoted little band was sustained throughout by the constantly recurring proofs they received of heavenly protection. The way in which the purse and the larder of the poor were replenished was a constant source of joy and gratitude. Two charitable persons sent weekly from their stalls in the market an abundance of meat for soup; a good man gave them for a number of years the produce of an acre of potatoes planted expressly for the poor; and a miser, who had by gathering manure in the streets and other such industries amassed £100, left that sum as a legacy. This miser had buried his treasure

beneath the earthen floor of the cabin he inhabited, and when he was dying he desired the priest who attended him to dig it up and give it to the Sisters of Charity for the poor. But the moment he saw the vessel containing the money withdrawn from its hiding-place, the old passion awoke, and making a desperate effort he sprang out of bed and strove to wrest it from the priest's hand. However the evil spirit was laid, the old man was helped into bed, and the treasure carried to the convent. The sisters saw him frequently during the days he survived. He lay in a wide settle-bed, and always so close to the wall that the visitor had to rest her hand on the side of the bed and stoop to speak to him. Between the stupor of approaching death and the effects of former habits of indifference to religious concerns, it was very hard to rouse him to the exertion his situation required. The sister's hands, when her mission was over, were usually covered with blisters from the biting of the bugs that swarmed in that poor man's bed.

A young man named Patrick Dunn, who having no Catholic relatives living in the house with him, was visited during his last illness by the Sisters of Charity, gave the rectress a sum of money, requesting her to order a large supply of blankets for the poor. Immediately after the interment, his brother Michael Dunn called at the convent, and told Mrs. Coleman that the deceased had by his will bequeathed the reversion of £1,500 to the Sisters of Charity for charitable purposes. Mr. Dunn added that, had another brother of his, who died some time before in the West Indies, known of the community and enjoyed the consolation of their visits, he too would have desired to aid their charities and have a share in their prayers; and he begged at the same time to present in the name of this his deceased brother Joseph, £100 for these intentions. "The little holy anecdotes of Patrick and Joseph Dunn," writes Mrs. Aikenhead at this time, "and of the kind-hearted surviving brother, are a cordial to our hearts. Truly faith is alive amongst the dear children of St. Patrick." Mr. Dunn and his family have continued generous benefactors both to the community and to the poor under their care.

One time when the funds were at the lowest ebb, the superior, who was ill, mentioned the fact incidentally to Father Michael O'Sullivan. He told her to preserve the peace of her soul and leave the matter in God's hands—that help would come from afar. Three days after this a letter arrived with an enclosure of £50 for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Six months later another remittance of the same amount, and with the same superscription arrived, and from that time forth it might be calculated on as a certainty that twice annually a fifty pound note would be received. No one could even guess at the donor's name. The letter was handed in through the little grating of the outer gate at night, and the herald disappeared unrecognised.

About the year 1837, Mrs. Denis Bullen resolved to open an infant school to counteract the effect of a similar institution which had been established by some Protestants in the parish in which the convent was situated, and was attracting a great number of Catholic children and causing their perversion. There were many difficulties in the way of this undertaking, but in the end they were overcome. Mrs. Bullen provided a teacher for the school, and requested the sisters to visit it every day. This they did, devoting to it whatever time could be spared. Great good was effected by this the first Catholic infant school established in Cork, not only by saving the faith of many poor children, but by creating a spirit of emulation among Catholics. Shortly after this the Presentation convent opened infant schools, and the parochial schools followed the example.

But of all the blessings which Providence bestowed on the sisterhood of Cork at this period, the greatest was the giving them for a friend the Rev. Michael O'Sullivan of the Vincentian community in that city. What this good father was to them in the midst of difficulties neither few nor small, is recorded in simple words in a page of the "Annals of the Congregation."

"In that saintly and universally venerated priest," as we there read, "God gave to our little community a father equally wise and affectionate, and to each of its members the kindest of brothers; above all, the example of living sanctity thus placed before us was a blessing such as is rarely bestowed on even the most favoured of religious houses. As a devoted charity to the poor of Christ was a leading trait in the character of Rev. Father Michael O'Sullivan, he felt the deepest interest in all that tended to soothe their afflictions or alleviate their sufferings: for this reason our duties early attracted his warmest sympathy. He visited the community prior to receiving Holy Orders. On the festival of St. John Francis Regis he said his second Mass at our altar. His first Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the North Presentation Convent, where his sister was. Afterwards when he became our honorary chaplain, he told his sister that it was the obscurity and abjection in which we lived that drew him to render us every attention in his power. Father O'Sullivan remained in his native town, Bantry, for two years after his ordination. About the beginning of 1836 he came to Cork and was appointed chaplain to the city prison. That duty left his Mass free, except on Sundays and holidays. From that time he became our chaplain, friend, and father: in fine everything to us. On Sundays he celebrated Mass at the prison, preached, and heard confessions; and after discharging his duty there, he, for several months, while the health of Mother rectress was very bad, celebrated a second Mass at our convent every Sunday at a late hour, that she might not have the fatigue of going out to the church. In 1836 Mother rectress, who was in a very weak state of

health, was called to Dublin on business so pressing that she was desired to travel by the night mail, and to take as companion a young domestic postulant who was going to the novitiate. When our good father heard of this arrangement, though at the time pressed by more than ordinary duty at the prison, having a large number of convicts to prepare for transportation, he insisted on accompanying Mother rectress. It was fortunate he did, as she suffered much during the journey, not only from illness, but from terror, having as her coach companions two tipsy men. On returning immediately to Cork the rev. father found that the convicts had unexpectedly been hurried off to Dublin. He hastened back to Dublin, and having discharged his duty towards them, remained there till Mother rectress was ready to return home. But it was not only to the community in Cork that Father O'Sullivan was a friend and benefactor—the congregation in general shared his charity. If he heard that any member of it was ill, or dead, he at once offered the Holy Sacrifice for her. If he was told that the Rev. Mother had asked prayers for a particular intention, at once he would offer a novena of Masses; and those who knew him well, and were acquainted with his sentiments regarding our congregation, feel confident that many blessings were conferred on it through his prayers. In June of this year (1837) Father O'Sullivan gave instructions during Triduum, and continued the same kind services during the following eighteen years, till his holy death.—R. I. P."

Saint Mary Magdalen's Asylum was now to be added to the cares of the Cork community. This institution had been founded in 1809 by a Mr. Therry, a man of humble rank but of a nobly charitable disposition. He had realised property in trade, and appropriated his fortune to the handsome endowment of the institution. The asylum was placed under the charge of a matron directed by a committee of ladies; but by degrees the ladies ceased to attend at the asylum as a body, leaving one of the number, Mrs. Paul MacSweeny, in sole charge of its interests. This lady judged that the only means of preserving the institution from ruin was to place it under the care of a religious community. She spoke to the bishop on the subject, and urged him to engage the Sisters of Charity to take charge of the asylum. Negotiations were entered into between the bishop and Mrs. Aikenhead; and, many difficulties having been surmounted, it was finally determined that a convent should be erected on the property of the asylum and in immediate connection with it. Four gentlemen were appointed as trustees by the bishop, namely, Messrs. James Daly, Thomas Lyons, Paul MacSweeny, and John Troy.

A promise had been given that a collection should be made through the city for the erection of the convent. This, however, was but partially carried out; and the community, deprived to a certain extent of public support, had to depend on the extraordinary energy

and zeal of devoted friends. Mrs. Denis Bullen was indefatigable in collecting subscriptions and keeping the accounts. She contrived to supply the Mother rectress with a sum sufficient to pay the labourers employed in levelling the very rugged piece of ground on which the convent was being erected. This levelling was very expensive work, but essential, and if the money had not been thus early obtained, the general progress would have been most inconveniently retarded.

An equally zealous and valuable friend at this crisis was Miss Lucy Lynch, afterwards Mrs. Crowley, who having become aware of the community's embarrassment regarding monetary affairs, induced her aunt, Miss Mahony, to give her a cheque for £400,[1] which she immediately brought to the Mother rectress to be employed in advancing the new building.

The foundation stone of the new convent was laid by the bishop, Dr. Murphy, on the 6th of August, 1844, the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. This was a day of joy to Mrs. Aikenhead. She had long desired to see the little community released from "Cork Castle," which had been a sort of prison and pest-house to them : for they had suffered greatly from fever during their many years' occupancy of that unhealthy and every way inconvenient dwelling. An effort had early been made to procure the community a more healthful situation, and they were at one time about to be established near their friends and benefactors, the Mahony family. But Dr. Murphy objected. He said they were in the midst of their work, and ought to remain there among the poor people they laboured for. Mrs. Aikenhead, who had wished for and favoured the change, did not think it right to oppose the bishop, and the community remained for nineteen years in what had been originally meant for a temporary residence. When at length a new convent was in course of construction, the Rev. Mother naturally showed the greatest interest in every detail. She was particularly anxious that the necessary space should be given in every department, and that ventilation and sanitary arrangements should be provided for in time. "Of course you will look narrowly into the calculations of space for your new convent," she writes to the rectress ; "one thing is that I wish your refectory and recreation-room not to be less than 24 or 25 feet by 18. They ought not to be less for a community of sixteen or eighteen, which I hope yours will one day be—and that not far off."

[1] This seasonable aid of £400 was not the first large sum given by Miss Mahony to the Sisters of Charity. She and her sister (deceased in 1816) are properly the founders of the Cork convent. Mr. Timothy Mahony, whom we have named as founder in a previous part of this work was not the founder, but was so good a friend that he was sometimes spoken of as holding that position, both by the sisters and others : the identity of name causing, perhaps, some confusion of ideas. A memorandum in Mrs. Aikenhead's handwriting which has turned up, proves the obligations of the congregation to the Miss Mahonys. They must have given donations to the amount of nearly £4,000.

The building was now carried on with expedition, and at the end of fifteen months the convent was finished. Mrs. Bullen suggested that an appeal in the form of a bazaar should be made in order to obtain means for furnishing the house; and great were the labours she went through in organising the affair, and great the expense she was at in providing handsome prizes. Many a time she sat up till three or four o'clock in the morning, working one of those great ottomans of former days, with pillows all done in tapestry-stitch beautifully and wonderfully. When the house was actually being furnished she was equally kind and helpful, looking after what was necessary for the sisters' simple wants, and ordering and arranging what they themselves had neither time nor opportunity to see after.

Though the interior arrangements were anything but complete and the walls were far from dry, the community were anxious to remove to the new house. Their friends objected to this; Dr. Bullen was requested to examine the new edifice, and the Mother rectress was in dread lest he should pronounce against immediate occupancy. The doctor gave his consent, however; but required that the nuns should inhabit the upper storey first, and descend by degrees. "*You* may go," said he to the sisters, "for you have been living in a rotten house, and the damp will do you no harm; but do not on any account allow the sisters from Dublin to come to it till spring!"

On the 9th of November, 1845, the feast of the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin, the community took possession of their new abode. "When," say the Annals, "the dear nuns of the North Presentation Convent (which is exactly opposite our new convent) heard that the removal was to take place, they sent a most affectionate invitation to us to spend the day with them on removing from the old to the new house. The bishop having given his permission, our sisters spent a really happy day with their kind friends. Early in the morning they notified to our sisters that their garden (private) door was open. When they entered they were met by two or three of the superiors and conducted by them to their choir, where places had been prepared for the visitors. After Mass and Benediction all went to the refectory, where they had recreation-breakfast—a very rare occurrence in their Order, but permitted in sweet charity on this occasion. The day was cheerfully and religiously spent: no spiritual duty omitted by either community, but in the intervals each enjoyed the company of the other—walking through the gardens, and inspecting the convent and schools. Our sisters did not leave till nine o'clock, when they were accompanied to their own gate by the chaplain, the Rev P. Murphy."

Father O'Sullivan celebrated the first Mass in the oratory on the Festival of All Saints, and formally blessed the house on the 11th of the same month. The community having left in the old house

a bin of meal (which seemed to multiply under the patronage of St. John Francis Regis, for no matter how much they distributed, the store never failed) two sisters continued to go there every morning for some time to serve the poor from the store. Meanwhile the reinforcement due from the capital remained in safe quarters till the opening season, leaving the late denizens of Cork Castle to weather the winter as best they could, in the midst of reeking walls and half-furnished apartments. For six months after the removal to the new convent there appeared a serious deficiency in the purse of the poor —the good friend who had been for so many years in the habit of remembering "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," seemed to have withdrawn his bounty. One day, however, after the expiration of that term, the bishop called, accompanied by a gentleman, to see the house. The latter, in the course of the conversation, quietly remarked that there used to be a little grating in the convent door, which was now no longer to be seen. The hint was taken; the grating was put up next day, and the usual donation followed immediately. Thus it was the sisters recognised their benefactor—Mr. Walter Murphy.

On the 8th of June, 1846, the community, whose number had been increased shortly before by the arrival of a contingent of five sisters from Dublin, entered on the charge of St. Mary Magdalen's Asylum. The building inhabited by the penitents stood close to the convent, but partly from age, and partly from defective construction, the tenement was in a ruinous and even a dangerous state. There was not accommodation for more than twenty inmates; the habitation was destitute of the appliances necessary for carrying on the work of the institution; the interior condition of the house was disorderly and uncomfortable in the extreme, and there were no means available for setting matters on a good footing. "We have undertaken the care of the Penitents' Asylum," writes Mrs. Aikenhead at this time. "It is indeed arduous, and will I expect afford us many, and not trifling, opportunities to prove to our heavenly Father that every part and portion of our willing labour in His own divine service is gratefully undertaken."

The Mother-rectress and the sisters saw enough of difficulty in the way to frighten timid souls; but not being of that class, they placed their trust in God; and hoping that the Refuge of Sinners, under whose patronage the institution was now placed, would not forsake the cause, they worked on courageously. The poor penitents, thirteen in number, though at first they seemed delighted with the change, were so unaccustomed to order of any kind that they soon grew weary of restraint, and by degrees dismissed themselves. When the house was thus cleared of its ancient population, the sisters began to form the penitents, newly received, to the duties of their state. Father O'Sullivan, whose devotedness and zeal knew no limitation, now

undertook the office of confessor to the penitents. By his instructions from the altar and in the confessional, he impressed them with such dispositions that their example had the most salutary effect on the women who were subsequently admitted. So essential was it considered that the foundation of the institute should be solidly laid, that for the first two years the total number of penitents in the asylum did not exceed twenty.

The consecration of Dr. Delany as Bishop of Cork, in succession to Dr. Murphy, deceased, in April, 1847, was a sincere joy to Mrs. Aikenhead. In him the Cork community have been blessed with a true father and friend, whose considerateness has smoothed many difficulties and whose support has helped to make serious obstacles vanish. And indeed just at this time the sisters stood much in need of fatherly support and consolation, for the terrible famine and its attendant fever[1] had begun to lay waste the city and county of Cork; their energies were strained to the utmost; and the very air they breathed was laden with affliction. All through the following year (1848) the double scourge raged with ever-increasing violence. The consequences were so appalling as to baffle all description, and none but those who witnessed the sufferings of the poor could form even the remotest idea of the condition to which they were reduced. Those who were not struck down by fever were frequently to be seen creeping along in search of food until nature sank exhausted; and it was no very unusual occurrence to have the last sacraments administered to those expiring creatures in the streets, or perhaps in some entry to which they had been removed. Thus the sisters who had laboured with almost superhuman ardour during the cholera years, were now summoned to help in a still more heart-breaking crisis. Generous and persevering were the efforts made by the citizens of Cork to feed and save the starving multitude. But the work was endless; for the country people, or rather the shadows of the once hardy peasantry, crept into the town seeking a share of the charity which seemed almost as inexhaustible as the demands made upon it. Heroic were the deeds of some individuals who might be named, in ministering to the victims of famine and disease; heart-touching above all were the examples of patience, resignation, and other virtues exhibited by the poor.

[1] "Nor was fever the chief and most direct element of destruction during the famine period, but the cause also of greatest panic amongst the people, and of extreme horror to the stranger and the eye-witness; for during the highest pressure of the disease in the summer 1847, and before accommodation for patients approached anything like the necessity of the time, most mournful and piteous scenes were presented in the vicinity of Fever Hospitals and workhouses in Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Galway, and other large towns. There, day after day, numbers of people, wasted by famine and consumed by fever, would be seen lying on the footpaths and roads waiting for the chance of admission; and when they were fortunate enough to be received, their places were soon filled by other victims of suffering and disease." (Report of the Census Commissioners for 1851, p. 448. The deaths in the Cork Workhouse during the year 1847 amounted to 3,329.

Even the little children in Mrs. Bullen's Infant-school who, through that lady's unceasing exertions were daily supplied with some food, frequently concealed under their pinafores a part of the bread given to them, and carried it to the starving ones at home. The sisters not only laboured to help, but they actually suffered with, the people. In the spring of 1848 one of the community was attacked by fever; before she had recovered the Mother-rectress caught the disease; and in the course of the summer five others had fever or dysentery. In three or four cases the attack was of a most dangerous description. How to maintain the penitents had become a very serious question. The asylum had no funds of any kind; and the proceeds of its labour were quite inadequate to the support of the institution. But Providence once more sent bread from afar. From America came shiploads of food for the perishing people of Ireland. The Sisters of Charity received a liberal share of their bounty; and the American flour, meal, rice and biscuit constituted the principal support of the penitents during the season of distress, and enabled the nuns to minister to the wants of the extern poor.[1]

The terrible famine year closed at length, but the following year was also a period of great suffering to the poor. There was a remarkable mortality among the young. In numberless instances parents saw a family of many children swept off in two or three weeks.

Much as the sisters had suffered from fever and from hardships of many kinds, the community lost not even one of its members by death from its establishment in 1826 until 1851. In the last-named year, however, died Sister Mary de Sales Clynch. She was the second member who joined the congregation after the return of Mrs. Aikenhead and Mrs. Walsh from York, and she was one of the community sent to make the foundation in Cork. For more than five-and-thirty years

[1] Mr. A. M. Sullivan, in the first volume of "New Ireland," gratefully records the help given to the starving multitude by the people of England, who subscribed hundreds of thousands of pounds for the purchase of bread-stuffs; and by the Society of Friends, who were foremost in relieving the famishing. "From America," he says, "came a truly touching demonstration of national sympathy. Some citizens of the States contributed two ship-loads of bread-stuffs, and the American Government decided to furnish the ships which should bring the offering to the Irish shore. Accordingly two war-vessels, the Macedonia and the Jamestown frigates, having had their armaments removed, their 'gun-decks' displaced and cargo bulk-heads put up, were filled to the gunwale with best American flour and biscuits, and despatched on their errand of mercy."

Nor were the French unmindful of the call of charity at this sad crisis. They also lent a generous aid to the perishing Irish. Among others, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul organised a collection for the sufferers. The first contributor was a poor sick man, who handed in his penny; then followed offerings of large amount, including some magnificent altar plate and silver table furniture from a priest—name unknown. Thirty-one years later, the present Bishop of Orleans, Monseigneur Coullié, was informed by the treasurer-general of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul that the "unknown priest" who had thus given everything of value he possessed to the poor Irish, was no other than his illustrious predecessor, Monseigneur DUPANLOUP, who was at that time *vicaire* at Saint-Roch. See the *Semaine Religieuse*, Nov., 1878.

Sister M. de Sales laboured in the service of the poor, with an ardour which even age could not abate. Though she had nearly reached her eightieth year she was able to continue her duties to the poor up to the close of her life. The day before the Triduum, preparatory to the renovation of vows, she spent in visiting the sick. During the exercises she was attacked with paralysis, but her intellect was not impaired. She made her confession, received holy communion, and, though confined to bed, renewed her vows on the feast of the Holy Name with the most perfect recollection and fervour. Three days later she received Extreme Unction, and passed calmly to Him for whose glory she had so zealously laboured. Sister M. de Sales was remarkably handsome even in her latest years, and after death her countenance retained all the sweetness that during life had rendered her so engaging. Her remains were laid in the little convent cemetery which was blessed by the bishop on the morning of the interment, and her name was treasured by the poor to whom she had ministered in their affliction, and whose hearts she had drawn to God.

When the aspect of affairs brightened a little, the sisters began to think seriously of trying to improve the asylum and its dependencies. They and the penitents had suffered greatly from the miserable condition of the laundry, where, during the winter, they were often ankle deep in water. The only place for drying the clothes, when they could not be put outside, was the ironing-room; and there the heat of the irons and of the stove, and the steam arising from the wet clothes, rendered the apartment injurious to the strongest constitution. The accommodation in the house was quite too limited for the increasing number of inmates. Trusting in help from on high, and strongly supported by the encouragement they received from Father O'Sullivan and other good friends, the Mother rectress began the erection, first of a new laundry, and then of a new asylum. On each occasion the first stone was laid by that true father of the poor, "Father Michael." "The idea," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "that the foundation-stone is to be laid on the approaching feast of St. Vincent gleams like a sunbeam in the midst of an accumulation of business and solicitude. May our Lord watch over and prosper the exertions of those kind *blessings* of friends whom He has given us. Without such, the state of matters would assuredly now be very different."

The plan was so arranged that the building could be erected in parts as circumstances required. The old structure was therefore demolished according as the new work progressed. Additions were thus made at intervals during five years, when at length the edifice was completed. A heavy debt was necessarily contracted; but some bequests, a share of the proceeds of a bazaar, and the annual charity sermon, gradually removed the pecuniary embarrassments of the institution. The number of penitents steadily increased, and their

work gave such satisfaction that there was no lack of applications from families desiring to have their washing done at the asylum.

Among the providential aids received about this time was a large donation sent to the convent for the sick-poor from Havana, in the island of Cuba. The benefactor, whose name was Daniel Warren, was, as he mentioned in a letter accompanying the donation, a native of Cork, and had gone to America many years before. Soon after his arrival in New York he was attacked with a dangerous illness, and having neither money nor friends, sought relief in one of the public hospitals of the city. Gratitude to the paternal Providence of God in thus opening to him a resource in his distress, induced him to form a resolution that should he ever realise any property he would expend it, as far as possible, in providing relief for the sick-poor. This friend of the poor continued during several years his liberal remittances to the community.

In fact the aid which the Sisters of Charity in Cork received from private, and often anonymous benefactors, was hardly less than miraculous. There seemed to be many citizens who made money for no other purpose than to expend it on the poor. Among the friends who helped in building the new convent and asylum was Mr. John Troy, a nephew of Archbishop Troy of Dublin, who held the lucrative and important post of collector of the customs in the port of Cork, and enjoyed the high esteem of all classes. While the new convent was in course of erection he took upon himself the whole responsibility and trouble of looking after the work, and constantly replenished the funds out of his own purse. When timber was wanted for the flooring of the asylum he undertook a journey for the purpose of securing, on advantageous terms, a quantity of the finest memel washed ashore from a wreck. A wall was required at a time when the necessary outlay could not be incurred by the trustees, and Mr. Troy built the wall at his own expense. He was to be seen with his coat off, digging in the garden, and planting the shrubs with his own hands. He gave paintings for the chapel and rare engravings for the parlours. Even to this day his name is repeated in a sort of litany whenever the sisters are showing their house to visitors:—Do you know who gave us that picture?—Good Mr. Troy. Do you know who laid out that parterre?—Good Mr. Troy; and so on all over the house and grounds.

Mrs. Aikenhead's letters to Cork at this time are full of grateful expressions of her obligation to this ever-thoughtful and energetic friend. In one place she says: "I feel we shall not diminish what we owe to the Divine Majesty, by our gratefulness to the friends He has raised up for us. I think we are mainly indebted to Mr. Troy for our interests being so very respectably attended to, and certainly I could not say too much of all that is respectfully grateful to this invaluable

friend." And again: "May our Lord reward our respected friend—we may well say *patron*—Mr. Troy. His charity and zeal in our behalf have been a real treasure from that loving Providence who has so wonderfully preserved our little barque through so many and such storms. Truly you have been wonderfully blest in such a friend as valuable and valued Mr. Troy." Sometimes his name is associated with that of a most cherished friend of his own and of Mrs. Aikenhead, the Rev. Father Russell of the Order of Preachers. "I had not the enjoyment," she says, "of as much of the society of the Rev. Mr. Russell as when he visited the city in summer. His valued interest in you and community continues unabated, and his reports of the truly active and respectable friend whom our Lord has inclined towards us, in the wise and good Mr. Troy, are very heart-stirring."[1]

As the old friendship between the Presentation nuns and the Sisters of Charity was recalled to mind, in the account given some pages back of the day the neighbouring communities spent together, we may mention here that about the very same time the Ursulines asked the Sisters of Charity to help them in reorganising their poor schools. "We have been not a little surprised," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "by the good Ursulines from Cork applying to us for assistance and advice on the method of governing poor schools. Of course we did not object, and have sent them our 'school government,' for which they express themselves most grateful. They are, thank God, beginning to employ some of their clever folk in the poor schools, which they frankly own had much fallen off. Is it not edifying to see a zeal for the improvement and advantage of the poor which is not ashamed to seek advice and instruction from those who seem calculated to give it, though so much younger in the employ?"

There would have remained many other incidents connected with the early days of the Cork house to be chronicled in this place, and many other names to be enshrined in grateful remembrance were it not that the record was unhappily destroyed. It happened in this way. After many years of labour, and when the first visitation of cholera had

[1] Mr. Troy died on the 19th of December, 1870, at the age of ninety-one. The following estimate of his worth occurs in an obituary notice in the *Freeman's Journal*:—"Rectitude of principle carried almost to a scrupulous extreme, the most delicate sense of honour, and the possession of solid business qualities, rendered his position in the department of the public service to which he was for a long course of years attached, that of a highly efficient and trusted officer. To his personal character still more than to his ability Mr. Troy owed his high position at a time when the promotion of a Catholic was a rare event in any official or remunerative career. His genial disposition, unbounded generosity, and princely hospitality, attracted round him wherever he went, the choicest society of the neighbourhood; and it was remarkable that among the Protestant aristocracy of an intolerant period were found his greatest admirers and most devoted friends. Thorough Catholic as he was in every thought, and principle, and action, the earnestness of his convictions, and the exactness with which he practised every precept of his faith, won for him the esteem of those who could not enter into his feelings or share his belief."

become a thing of the past, the sisters thought of putting their heads together, and making a record for the congregation of the interesting circumstances attending the foundation and the early growth of the Cork house. One of the sisters was well calculated to set down the narrative in proper form and language, and she, assisted by the superior and the other members of the community, covered many sheets of paper with the story. When all had been set down in due order the superior took an opportunity one morning of showing the production to the great friend and adviser of the community, Father O'Sullivan, who then and there read it from beginning to end, his countenance changing as scene after scene came before him. He made no observation until he had reached the last page, and then turning to her, he asked—"For whom was all this done?"—"For Almighty God," she answered. "Then," said he, "it is written in eternity. Burn this." She did so on the spot. Years after he wanted matter for a charity sermon which he was about to preach for the institution, and he asked the superior whether she had no records to supply him with. "How can you ask, Father Michael?" she replied. "Did you not make me burn them before your eyes!" It was no want of love for the congregation, no want of sympathy in a little bit of historical and literary enterprise that made him thus ruthless; for he was himself a good writer in prose and verse, besides the truest of friends; but it was an idea of the exceeding purity of intention and humility which should be cultivated in religious life.

In this matter he was as severe towards himself as he was rigid towards others. He had the accumulated labours of many years laid by—sermons, spiritual writings, and no one can tell what else, until, on being ordered to proceed to Rome, with little chance, as he thought, of ever returning, he resolved to leave no relics behind him. Coming one day to the convent he told the superior that he would send her a trunk sealed, which she should take to her own room and open; and that having taken out the contents she should burn them. He exacted a promise that she would comply with his directions. The trunk was carried to the convent. The superior shut herself up in her cell, and for two hours continued burning the papers, shedding tears as she did so. While one parcel was igniting the glare discovered the title, and nothing but the idea of truth and honour withheld her from snatching it out of the flames. It was an account of Mother Mary Aikenhead and her Cork foundation!

In 1855, it pleased the Almighty to visit the community with a heavy affliction in the death of Father Michael O'Sullivan. Up to the very last the Sisters of Charity were the object of his special care. The day before he was seized with the illness that terminated his life, he gave an exhortation at the convent on the text, "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me, We shall go into the house of the Lord."

He pointed out religious life as the "house of the Lord," and this sentence, together with other co-incident circumstances seemed afterwards to the nuns like a presentiment and prediction of his own approaching translation to eternal bliss, and their most sorrowful bereavement. Next morning, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, Father Michael celebrated his last Mass, and the nuns renewed their vows. Before the ceremony was ended he seemed to be on the point of fainting, and was obliged to sit down. Making a great effort he concluded the holy sacrifice. The sisters never saw him again. A fever brought on by fatigue and exposure to unwholesome air resulted in an attack of the lungs, and on the octave day of the great apostles the holy priest was called to share their reward. On the 9th of July his remains were laid in the convent cemetery awaiting the completion of his own church—that of the Vincentian Fathers—which was then in course of construction. Little more than a year later, on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, the patron of his Order, the remains of Father Michael were removed to the Church of St. Vincent which had been that day consecrated, and were laid beneath the sanctuary floor. So universal was the impression of the sanctity of the departed, and so deep the affection in which his memory was enshrined, that his community were fully aware that, if the removal took place in the daylight, the marks of public esteem and reverence which had been manifested at the time of his decease would be again renewed. Wishing to avoid a public demonstration the Fathers resolved to remove the remains after nightfall. But notwithstanding all the care taken to conceal their intention, some of the poor in the neighbourhood who had loved the deceased as a father, discovered their purpose; and when the convent gate was opened to bear out the coffin which the sisters attended with lighted tapers, a multitude surrounded the bier desiring to pay a tribute of gratitude to him, who, like his Divine Master, had gone about doing good to all.

In the course of the same year the Rev. Father Gillooly (now Bishop of Elphin), who had succeeded Father O'Sullivan as superior of the Vincentians, and who had with unbounded kindness endeavoured by every attention in his power to mitigate the trial which the Sisters of Charity had to sustain, requested the rectress to send two of the sisters every Sunday to give instructions in the crypt of St. Vincent's Church to the poor women of the neighbourhood who were to assemble there. The mission was undertaken and produced much good.

Early in the summer of 1857, the rectress, touched with compassion for the neglected condition of the little children who in great numbers inhabited the surrounding cabins, applied to the bishop for permission to open an infant-school. The permission was given, but with the restriction that there should be no collection either for its erection or for its support. Thus deprived of human help, the rectress trusted all

the more in the Providence which had so often and so wonderfully aided the community from the day of its first foundation in Cork. She took two little cabins adjoining the garden wall of the convent, and the partition having been removed, a school-room of moderate dimensions was formed, into which as many little children as it could possibly accommodate were received on the feast of St. Jerome Emilian. The opening of the school would have taken place on the feast of St. Vincent, the first anniversary of the translation of the remains of Father Michael O'Sullivan to St. Vincent's Church; but the feast occurring that year on Sunday, the opening was necessarily deferred until the following day. A different sort of class assembled on Sundays in the cabin school, when the poor women of the neighbourhood crowded in to receive catechetical instruction from two of the sisters who were appointed to that duty.

About a year later, permission having been given by the Most Rev. Dr. Delany, who had succeeded to the See of Cork, the sisters commenced building a new infant school. The Misses O'Regan, of St. Patrick's Hill, gave £400 in aid of the undertaking—a sum which they had offered for that purpose as early as 1853, and the interest of which they had meanwhile given to the sisters for the poor. In due course the little flock were transferred from the cabin to the well-lighted, well-ventilated school-room, while their numbers were increased by an addition selected from the multitude that thronged round the door of the new school on the day of its opening.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE GREAT OLD MOTHER—DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP MURRAY.

ALTHOUGH she had been greatly revived by the change from St. Vincent's Hospital to Harold's Cross, Mrs. Aikenhead was far too much of a confirmed invalid to allow of her most sanguine friends supposing she could ever regain her former strength. The old pains and infirmities were still her inseparable companions, while attacks of bronchitis became more frequent as age advanced. "As for myself," she says, "each attack (of illness) leaves a new sting after it, and though looking, as folks say, quite well, my ailments are neither few nor light. Time with me is in every sense of the word very short; but the hours of a shortened day need to be the better spent, as years are not at all to be depended on, nor expected." In the spring of 1847 she had so severe an attack of bronchitis that Dr. O'Ferrall, who did not like, he said, to bear alone the responsibility of so precious a life,

suggested that Sir Philip Crampton and Sir Henry Marsh should meet him in consultation. Accordingly, the three physicians visited the patient twice a day for nearly a fortnight, when, her life being despaired of, the consulting medical gentlemen took their leave, not expecting her to pass the night. But Dr. O'Ferrall would not so easily resign his charge. He resolved to make one bold effort, and called on Sir Philip Crampton for his sanction of the treatment he now proposed to adopt. The Surgeon-General was in the act of dressing for a ball at the Castle when Dr. O'Ferrall called on him, and he merely replied to the physician's question by saying: "You may do what you like with her: the woman is as dead as if you had shot her through the head." After this opinion Dr. O'Ferrall had no hesitation in following his own judgment, and he determined to give the patient, as he said, a chance for her life. He arrived at Our Lady's Mount near midnight, and desired the apothecary whom he had brought with him to cup her largely—in fact to put the scarificators wherever he could find a spot between the blistered surface of the back. He ordered the calomel to be resumed, and then left his patient without much hope of seeing her alive in the morning. To his great surprise and happiness he found at his morning visit that the crisis had passed; and from that time she rapidly progressed to recovery.

Before Lent was over, the Rev. Mother was to be seen sitting up, pen in hand, once more. "You will see, my dear Mother," she writes, "how much I have to keep my head full, and though so much recovered I am not able for executing my business as formerly: But truly I have every reason to bless the Almighty for the extraordinary co-operation of all around me. May our Lord spare you all while it is His divine will to leave the work in my hands."

This her prayer was heard: and it did please the Almighty to leave her all those who assisted her in the government, and all the rectresses save one. A little later, she is able in the following letter to give assurance to one of her correspondents that she is almost herself again:—

"*The Sisters of Charity, St. Mary's, Harold's Cross,*
"*Palm Sunday*, 1847.

"DEAREST MOTHER-RECTRESS,

"I think you will be agreeably surprised to find me actually at the old trade. Thanks to our merciful Father I progress very wonderfully, though not quickly, as many little ailments arise, and strength returns by slow degrees. However, I am anxious to give you and your very dear little flock the first assurance of my being able to do a little, but let this note be only spoken of among yourselves; and be sure to continue your prayers, that with real fervour I may try to prove that this renewal of life is granted to be spent solely for God, and to become each day more fit to

meet the last awful summons. May each and all of us do our best to keep the lamps full of the holy oil of humility and charity, that so we may be ready at the call of the heavenly Bridegroom.

"I hope to hear of your being well over the ailments which you have been suffering, by the Easter festival; and that you will take all necessary care. This I feel is not an easy matter with so many responsible affairs as you are burdened with. And truly, the awful state of our poor country is painfully depressing.

"I feel myself not quite able to write as much as I could enjoy doing; but a word is better than nothing. I think that Mother Mary Lucy will have told you that the copy of the martyrology is a present from our dear friend Mrs. O'Brien. She gave one to each of our communities as a token of congratulation on my recovery. This work I often wished for, and Mrs. Ball has effected its publication. We always had this (in a very inferior edition) read at supper in York. I have added a copy in case you may wish to present it to Mrs. O'Sullivan of the Presentation convent. All the ancient convents use the martyrology.

"At long last goes the very lady-like reticule for Mrs. D. Bullen. It was sent to me from Paris by our friend Miss Hamill who worked it herself; also two books for the young ladies; two Roman prints lately got, in case you like them. And now, dearest mother, adieu. With love to each dear sister,

"Yours affectionately in J. C.,
"M. A."

The next year, 1848, has hardly commenced, when Mrs. Aikenhead speaks of her recovery from another attack of illness, saying that she has been permitted to arise from bed, though not so wonderfully as St. Peter's mother-in-law, yet in a way that was scarcely to be expected in the case of one who carries disease which she cannot expect to be relieved from. She is desired to rise every day about one o'clock and take her dinner sitting up: this, as a remedy to keep down fever and troublesome affections of the head. And then she gives thanks to the Divine mercy that she feels really better and able to enjoy doing some little to help the work. There has been illness too at Elm Green, the home of her good old friends the Simpsons, and she is greatly concerned about their trouble.

"I regret to tell you," she writes, "that one of our true friends has been in a very alarming state—Mr. Thomas Simpson. The doctor has been for the last fortnight obliged to sleep mostly at Elm Green, going out there after his day's visits: an affection of the ear requiring a very skilful operation which has (D. G.) so far succeeded. My really dear friend Richard is now in a serious attack of influenza, and my poor dear Helen has also been ill, and is not yet well. Richard was with me on the 17th instant. You may judge nothing but pressing business could urge me to ask him to come hither in such weather, and I in bed ill. May our Lord preserve him! Amen. Pray, for truly we are under a good share of the embarrassments of our state and the charge attached to extensive undertakings. At this moment I am hurried away from as quiet a finish of this letter as I could enjoy, by the said difficulties of all whom we are connected with requiring what is unreasonable from us. This last refers to our hospital,

and so do other embarrassments weighing on me. So pray that we may do all things well.—A. M. D. G.; but speak not to any one of this subject. The quieter all about our concerns goes on the better."

From this date up to the death of Dr. Murray, Mrs. Aikenhead lived on, struggling against an accumulation of infirmities, yet with a mind ever actively working, and a hand from which the pen was seldom suffered to drop. She was now about sixty-five years of age —an old woman certainly, yet full of intellectual vitality and mental power. One of her children, whose acquaintance with the Mother-General of the Sisters of Charity began at this time, has kindly, at our request, noted down her recollections of Mrs. Aikenhead, beginning at the beginning, and giving incidentally her first impressions of the congregation. The picture thus sketched is extremely graphic, and forms a pendant to the portrait by another hand, of an earlier date, which we have already given. Here is Mother N. N.'s chapter of reminiscences:—

"When the religious vocation first began to make itself felt in me I certainly was not much in love with nuns. I had an idea they must be rather weak people. One day I thought I should like to have a look at one of them, and on some pretence or another I went to the Gardiner-street convent and knocked at the door. The sister who received me struck me as totally different from what I expected. She seemed a frank, reliable sort of person, who had a clear intelligence and knew how to use it. Soon after this, meeting a reverend friend who knew what were my views and wishes, I told him that I had seen a Sister of Charity, and that she looked as if she had the mind of a man. 'The mind of *what*, child?' said the priest. 'Oh, father,' I replied, "I have said it once too often." But for all that I had to repeat the word, and say that there was a strength of character and an intellectual power in the appearance and manner of the Sister of Charity, though she was far from unfeminine, which particularly impressed me. 'Ah,' said he, 'this comes from the great old mother—she puts her stamp on them!'

"By-and-by I got over some of my own difficulties about giving up my liberty and my friends, but there still remained many obstacles to be surmounted. I had little hope of getting easily away from home. However, it was necessary for me to go and speak to Mrs. Aikenhead and see whether she would allow me to try to be a Sister of Charity, in case I found it possible to arrange matters so that I could enter the noviceship. When I first went to her on this errand she was able to walk a little. So she came down stairs assisted by a lay-sister; leaning on a stick; and attended by a very plebeian black dog, which leaped up beside her when she sat down, and made one of the party. 'This is Dandy,' she said, 'my faithful dog.' I took greatly to the idea of the dog, and thought there was a promise of kindness in the

fact of his being admitted to the friendship of the Mother of the congregation. She struck me as a magnificent old woman, with—I cannot say the remains of great beauty, but—a beauty remarkable of its kind. There was a grandeur in the outline of the features and in their expression ; and there were certain curves about the mouth and cheeks which I do not remember to have seen so marked in any other face. Her large, well-set eyes, which looked soft enough to melt when she was moved, and were so heavenly when a holy chord was touched, had also much humour in them at times, and could give full expression to a majestic severity when it was necessary to defend a just cause. Her soul shone through them.

"My first impressions were confirmed by further experience. She inspired both fear and love. But the fear was perhaps rather that diffidence which one feels in the presence of a powerful and strongly individualised character. And yet, I do not remember that I ever met anyone to whom I approached with greater confidence, and in whose presence I less felt my own weakness. I heard another person say the same thing : a woman of the world, very intellectual, by no means pious in the sense in which the word is usually taken, and with faults plainly enough to be seen. This lady had mixed much with clever people and had a reputation for talent; but in the presence of the Rev. Mother she was a child—and a good child. In fact I could say anything to Rev. Mother, and could tell her things which one 'would hardly tell to any.' Her nature was so large and her sympathies were so wide, that one could feel certain at any rate of not being misunderstood when speaking in full openness and trust. I often noticed the effect she produced on people of the world. It was a right good effect. She was most agreeable in manner and full of information. She commanded respect; and instinctively people came out in their best aspect when in her presence. Whatever she said was well expressed : there was something superior in the accent and manner, and in the choice of words ; one could perceive cultivation of mind, and justness of taste in all. A touch of the old school with its rounded periods and apt quotations, suggested familiarity with good writers ; and her voice when I knew her had that deep chest tone which adds impressiveness to the words.

"People who were introduced to her in her sitting-room were likely enough to find their angry feelings, if they had them, mollified, and their unworthy ideas dispersed, in the presence of the woman who sat there like an old empress—yet all the mother too. I remember my father having to go to her at one time, when he was far from reconciled to my retirement to a convent, and therefore not in the best dispositions. Rev. Mother was afraid there would be much difficulty about the necessary arrangements; and I, having left her and her visitor together, retired in no small anxiety. On my

return what was my surprise to find them engaged in the most cordial conversation; my father with his best manners on—quite courtly—and all things settled satisfactorily. Much the same thing happened in the case of another father of a family, two of whose daughters had set their hearts on entering Mrs. Aikenhead's congregation. The old gentleman was in a state of considerable irritation when he came to the convent to speak to the superior. Before he left, however, he knelt down and asked her blessing. 'Oh,' said she, 'to think of a patriarch asking my blessing!'

"The first time I was admitted to Rev. Mother's private sitting-room, that is the room in which her latter years were almost entirely spent, I was much struck by its fitness to the grand old form, so motherly yet so majestic, that sat there. Not that the apartment was grand in any sense; but there was something about it that harmonised with the mother herself: it was a good frame for a good picture. It expressed the common sense (not common-place) spirit of the institute she founded. It was not an austere-looking chamber by any means; for there she received her friends and persons who wanted to see her on special business.

"To come to particulars. It was a square, sufficiently large, but not very lofty room on the second story of the old fashioned country house. Two windows, rather broad than high, looked out on the green tree-dotted lawn with a pond at the end and a row of poplars, since cut down. A third window on the west side and close to the other, afforded a view into the spacious garden, well stocked with hardy fruit-trees, fragrant but by no means rare flowers, and vegetables of every sort and size. Great folding-doors of an oaken colour, extending from wall to wall and reaching almost to the ceiling, occupied the side of the room opposite the front windows, and formed a background to Rev. Mother's venerable figure, as she sat beside a circular table covered with green, on which were books, papers, and a desk of no mean dimensions. A large oil painting in an oak frame filled the space between the mantelpiece and the ceiling, and represented an aged hermit lost in meditation before an open book, his hands laid across each other in an attitude of unbroken rest. The mantelpiece thus surmounted was on the same side as the window overlooking the garden, and consequently on the mother's left hand as she sat at her table. When you entered the room (the door opening from the landing opposite the west window) your eye inevitably glanced from Rev. Mother to the hermit, and thence back again. The picture added to the repose and spiritual atmosphere of the place, and harmonised with the breathing portrait beneath of saintly prayerful old age. There were also some rare ancient engravings—pious subjects in dark frames—on the walls: among them being, as one might expect, a representation of her own dear and special patron, St.

Augustine. She liked good pictures, and thought that holy subjects had a right to art's best endeavours. She could not be rebuked by our Lord as St. Teresa was, for scrupuling the possession of a valuable picture on the plea that it was contrary to the poverty she professed. Quite otherwise : she wished her communities to have good pictures or engravings, and in all the houses she founded these things are to be seen.

"But to return to the room. The floor, darkly stained and polished, was carpeted in the centre. One or two book-cases, some plain but not rude furniture—all with the impress of age upon them, a pot of musk or a vase of flowers completed the arrangements. The latter, her children loved to supply her with, that their sweetness and beauty might cheer her who so loved the fair face of nature—the mirror of the heavenly Father's goodness. Here, on summer evenings she would sit at the open window, looking at the sun as it sank behind the trees : her dear friend, assistant, and counsellor, Mother Francis Magdalen (MacCarthy) beside her ; or that other, more than daughter, who was her inseparable companion for years ; or, again, dear Mother Mary Lucy (Clifford) as faithful as either, coming in with her clear voice and bright smile, to tell her some amusing occurrence that had taken place, and cheer her after the anxieties and mental labours of the day. In spite of cares, which she never shirked in the smallest degree, she could enjoy a joke, and laugh over a 'bit of fun' to the last. I have heard such merry laughter in the old mother's room —dear Mother Mary Lucy's silver voice at the top of it. The old writer's description of St. Louis of France comes into my mind : 'and if you had been with him you would have heard him laugh pleasantly at intervals, speak out boldly when there was occasion for it, and take care that all around him should have an air of brightness.' It made Rev. Mother very interesting in conversation, this readiness to be amused, and the wit and humour of her own remarks. She liked to see the same in the sisters ; and this was so well known that if any amusing or interesting letter came to any of them, especially if it were from a daughter of the congregation, it would be sent off forthwith to give 'the Reverence,' as she was sometimes playfully called, a laugh, or to show her what was in the writer ; and no one would enjoy it more than she.

"A shrewd observer she was of men and things, and not easily imposed on, but she recognised merit where it existed, and delighted in it. Her high-souled character was above the littleness which prevents not a few from appreciating merit of another order than their own. Good wherever it was found, perfection of different kinds and in different places, had all their meed of love and admiration, from the purest spirituality down through moral worth and natural gifts to the harmonious order of physical creation in sky and ocean,

plant and flower. She had read much in her youth, and even in after life often refreshed her mind with the works of able writers. Among her favourite books were many of the large solidly-bound and beautifully-printed tomes of one or two hundred years ago. Such for instance as the 'Histoires des Ordres Monastiques, Religieux, et Militaires, &c.,' printed in Paris, 1714; the 'Oeuvres Spirituelles,' of Guilloré (1684); the 'City of God,' in quarto, and the 'Letters of St. Augustine,' of an old edition; the 'Histoire des Chevaliers de S. Jean, de Jerusalem (1727). She also had in her collection the French pulpit orators of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, in modern editions; and standard works of history and general literature down to our own day.

"Rev. Mother's constant attendant at this time was a lay-sister named Monica. When not in the room she was sure to be within call, either waiting on the landing that looks out on the green fields, or in her own little cell just behind the apartment corresponding with Rev. Mother's, and called Mother Mary Lucy's room. Monica was an original character. She had not got much education, and though interested in whatever was going on, was not always able to follow the conversation which she heard when Rev. Mother's visitors touched on topics of the day, or entered into questions of vital importance to Church and State. When the Peel ministry went out of office, Sister Monica heard the subject discussed, and judging from the surprise and interest excited by the news that something of the highest importance had occurred, ran off to one of the sisters, exclaiming: 'Sure Peel is out!' 'Out of what?' inquired the sister. ''Aith I don't know,' returned Monica—'out of prison, I suppose.' Sister Monica, however, had very decided opinions on some subjects, and not only held to them firmly but expressed them in strong language on occasions. At one time she was portress at Harold's cross, and often had leisure moments when her child, as she called the hall-door bell, was not crying. To fill up these moments, since she could not be always praying, Rev. Mother gave her Miss Strickland's 'Lives of the Queens of England.' Monica began the interesting study; but after a time, coming on something not very edifying in the lives of certain of those royal ladies, she brought back the book. '*Queens*, indeed!' she said. 'I'd call them blackguards! I'll have nothing to do with them.' She herself greatly enjoyed anything amusing, but nothing pleased her more than that Rev. Mother and the nuns should have a hearty laugh. I saw her one day in a delighted attitude outside the door. 'I love to hear them laughing that way,' she remarked.

"Dandy and Monica were good friends. She used to have talks with the dog, which he evidently enjoyed, though it is doubtful whether he understood the full meaning of her remarks. 'Keep up your

spirits, Dandy,' she said to him on one occasion when he looked a little downcast, 'you know you are a gentleman—your father was born on the Continent!' Dandy, too, was a wag in his way. As the Rev. Mother's 'faithful dog' he certainly enjoyed many privileges. Still, there were places into which he should not intrude. He disturbed the gravity of the refectory on one occasion by introducing himself at a solemn moment. The mistress of novices, of whom he was very fond, put up her finger in token of reproof; whereupon guilty Dandy advanced to the centre of the room, got on his hind legs, and begged pardon. The creature looked so ridiculous that the novices could not contain themselves; and there was an explosion of laughter, in the midst of which Dandy retired.

"Mrs. O'Brien was in the habit of coming to the mother-house twice a week, to spend an hour or two with her early friend: always planning good, and deeply interested in the good works undertaken. We used to meet Mrs. O'Brien going in and out of the room when we were novices; she liked to see the rising generation of the congregation, and could give, I believe, a shrewd guess as to who would do and who would not do. Whenever she saw a Sister of Charity at a distance from home on a country road, she always stopped her carriage and invited her to take a seat, and she would be quite offended if she were refused. Indeed, the sisters for many a year were to be seen driving in her open carriage every Tuesday to the Marlborough-street schools, where they gave religious instruction to the classes. I remember being told to save my feet whenever I could, as I should want them for the Lord's work, and never to refuse a 'lift' when it was offered.

"Another constant visitor was a certain Miss Humphries. The first time I heard the name I naturally displayed my ignorance. Whereupon one of the sisters said, with a look of astonishment: 'Don't you know Miss Humphries?' 'No,' I answered, 'who is she?' 'Oh, she is a great person,' was the reply, 'Rev. Mother can see her when she cannot see us, and has her in her room for hours consulting her about things.' I thought this was too deep a subject to make inquiries about, and secretly wondered who the mysterious lady could be. It was some time before I discovered that those long consultations were about old furniture for new foundations too poor to afford better, and that Miss Humphries kept a diligent look-out not only for such articles, but for anything else that might lie in Rev. Mother's way; and that certain old-fashioned black chairs and tables with very straight legs, had been introduced into the establishment by her. I suspect that Miss Humphries, in her attendance at auctions, picked up some of those old engravings and venerable books with which Rev. Mother delighted in supplying her convents.

"I subsequently learned that Miss Humphries selected our Friday's

dinner, going to market for it herself. A shrewd observer, or even an ordinary one, could form a fair guess at her character from these dinners; for the fish was invariably the same: no temptation could induce her to depart from what had once approved itself to her mind as the right thing. She was clear; she was constant; yet there were persons who would have been glad had she admitted a wider range—I will not say of ideas—but of fish. However, if she were sometimes a little too steadfast in her adherence to custom, there can be no doubt she was a dear, good, trusty and trusted friend of the congregation, to the exterior of which she was an honoured and venerable appendage. Miss Humphries, whose name was Effie, had a younger sister, Maryanne, the shadow or counterpart of herself. In their case the law of primogeniture was in such force that they were never spoken of in the plural number: the younger was supposed and implied when the elder was mentioned. At all events I do not remember at what period I became aware that there were two of them.

"These maiden sisters were in the trade—the old-furniture trade; and their house of business (their home as well) was in Bride's-alley. With them lived two cousins, John and Catherine Hand, a pair as primitive as they were themselves. The family was certainly not large; and yet how the four individuals compressed themselves into the very small space left free from old furniture—of which legs seemed to be the prevailing members, and were to be seen sticking out of the walls, hanging down from the ceiling, and cropping up from the floor—they knew best themselves. The arrangement was indisputably unfavourable to luxurious habits, and indeed no idea of luxury or self-indulgence could enter the mind in connection with Miss Humphries and her household. A little drive into the country, or perhaps only through the Phœnix Park, on Sundays in the summer time, was the sole recreation they allowed themselves; unless we take into consideration what doubtless became in course of time a species of recreation, namely, their constant attendance at auctions up and down through the city.

"However, the longest and simplest and most uneventful life must have its ending; and so death came to unsettle the quiet home in Bride's-alley. First died the two cousins, and then Miss Effie became sick unto death. Our sisters attended her, and did their best to comfort her last hours. Mrs. Aikenhead and many of her best-known friends had gone to heaven before her, but she was glad to see the representatives of a race whose first members she had loved so long. She died, and we hope is now in their company. It was sad to see the lonely survivor in that desolate home, without her whom she had looked up to for a lifetime. She felt it much, but lived on patiently and resignedly for some few years, getting rid by degrees of

the furniture, and cherishing the fond hope of dying at last with the Sisters of Charity. Maryanne advanced into light when the other—Effie—disappeared, and she used to come every Saturday to St. Vincent's Hospital with the same regularity, continuing to do useful things for the community, and conversing in her quiet, old-fashioned style, of the times, and the prospects of the country.

"At length when the furniture was nearly all sold, and she could bear the solitude no longer, she came to fulfil her heart's desire and spend her remaining days at St. Vincent's Hospital. There, for two years the tidy little body was seen daily at seven o'clock Mass; and then going out at ten to one of the city churches, or to see old friends and visit old haunts: always in the same brown cloak, and black velvet bonnet, and fur boa which she had worn for years. Indeed she never left her room, whether to pay a visit to the superior's office or to any other part of the house, without the boa, and the black velvet bonnet if it were winter, or a tuscan straw bonnet if it were summer. The tuscan head-gear was incredibly old, and was much valued. She would often bring a little present to the superior; but whether it was a purchase, or a remnant of past possessions drawn from some corner of her apartment, nobody could tell. It might be an old volume on medicine, or a pair of spectacles, or a silk handkerchief of ancient date. Sometimes the gift was of a more costly nature; and always as Christmas or charity sermon time came round she would bring her offering for the poor in gold. She had lived this gentle, quiet life for about two years, as I have said, when one day, after she had been complaining a little, the doctor was brought to her room. He found her quietly dying. There was not a moment's delay in administering the last sacraments, which she received calmly, piously, and sweetly. Her innocent life left no disturbing memory for the hour of death. Half an hour later she was in eternity.

"But to return once more to Mrs. Aikenhead. She often sent for some of the young sisters, the hope of the future congregation, to make herself better acquainted with them, and to learn in friendly conversation their turn of mind and character. In my noviceship days I was sometimes thus unexpectedly invited to Rev. Mother's room, and as a novice was not altogether free from apprehension lest it might be to hear I was not considered the right stuff for a Sister of Charity; but the moment I saw her this feeling would vanish, and when I got a motherly kiss as I knelt or sat beside her, my hand in hers, I could say out what was in my heart without distress or fear of misapprehension. I remember when the time for my profession was within a few months of arriving she spoke of it, on one of these occasions, as a certain thing. 'Oh, Rev. Mother,' I said, 'it frightens me to think of it.' 'Why, my heart?' 'Oh, it is such an honour, such a great thing,' I answered, 'to be pledged to God in that way. I

never could be worthy of it.' 'But it is *our own God*, you know,' she said, 'who comes to us in the Holy Communion. How could you be afraid of Him?' And she went on to speak of His goodness and His close union with us in the Blessed Sacrament. There was something so beautiful in the expression of her face, as with up-turned eyes and the utmost tenderness she spoke; and her words conveyed such an idea of God's infinite condescension, that I felt my awe change into hope and love, and went away with a new sense of His Almighty goodness.

"At other times it would be of lighter subjects she spoke. At the conclusion of one of those discursive talks she said in her playful way, 'You were very fond of novels—come now!' 'No, indeed, mother,' I replied, 'but I was dreadfully fond of poetry!' which little outburst amused her greatly. No matter whether the tone was grave or gay, I never remember to have left her after one of those private audiences without having received comfort, or strength, or pleasure from the conversation. The influence of her words was powerful. An old sister assured me that a few words which Rev. Mother said to her during her noviceship sustained her through her whole subsequent career. She had been engaged in one of those long confidential talks in which the heart and soul are poured out. When she ceased speaking, Rev. Mother looked at her and said: 'Mary, as sure as God is in heaven, you have a vocation. Do not lose the grace of it. Be faithful.' The words were simple, but there was a solemnity and sense of certainty about them that made them seem like those of God. She told me they were as a star to her through life. She had difficulties of a trying kind, such as seldom fall to the lot of religious; but the words were always in her memory, and kept her firm.

"Rev Mother could give her children a round reprehension on occasions; but when the reproof was administered, a kiss or a hug would heal the wound at once if she perceived that it had gone too deep. Once she was administering a correction to a sister whose impetuosity carried her too far. Another sister came in and found the delinquent in tears by the side of the Rev. Mother, who said, 'Here I am combing my child's hair with a three-legged stool!' and taking her into her great arms she gave her an embrace that set all right in a moment. She was far from implacable, and a small thing would divert her from her momentary severity. One day, Monica being in attendance on Rev. Mother, a sister came to the room; something which she said or did having excited the mother's displeasure drew down on her a sharp rebuke; she was recommended to try to imitate the humility and love of God of her sister, who also was a member of the congregation. 'You think yourself a great saint,' said Rev. Mother 'but you are devoured by self-love; your sister's heart is so full of the love of God there is no room for self-love in it.' 'Rev. Mother,'

said Monica, 'I thought there was nobody eaten up with self-love but myself; and now I hear poor Mrs. —— is as much devoured as I ever was!' Rev. Mother laughed, and said she wished self was dead in all her children.

"Like all great minds she was open to expostulation and advice, and could humble herself instantaneously. One time she was sending a severe message to some offender by a dear and trusted sister, who acted for her in a thousand cases when she was herself unable to go about. The sister said: 'Dear Mother, I cannot give that message.' 'Why, my heart?' 'Oh, it would do harm,' she answered; 'let me say it in my own way;' and then explained how. Rev. Mother paused, and then said quietly and humbly: 'Say, my dear, whatever the Holy Ghost will inspire you to say.'

"At times her humility was almost too great, and she would express her gratitude for little things in very strong terms. When the church of the novitiate was being built, I once carried up a heavy piece of stone cornice, richly carved, to show it to Mother Mary Lucy, who was in delicate health and unable to go out of doors. She sent me with my burden to Rev. Mother's room, that she too might enjoy the sight of it, she also being very ill. Having looked at the carving and admired the design, she said: 'Is it not very condescending of Mother Mary Lucy to think of sending it to me? Give her my love, and tell her I am very grateful to her. Be sure to tell her how much I feel it.' Another time an old Carmelite friar came to show himself in his habit, which she had expressed a wish to see. She was quite touched by his kindness, and asked me did I not think it very condescending of him to take the trouble of gratifying her. I said I did not! I hardly know what I should have considered a 'condescension' that was done for her. She sent for me one day and asked me to do her a great favour, quite a personal one, for which she would feel greatly obliged. This was to paint a pair of hand-screens for her, which she wanted to give a friend to whom she was grateful for some kindness. I felt quite ashamed of being asked in that way, and said I should consider it a great honour to be allowed to do them for her. 'Honour!' oh, that was a word which should never be used to her—and which was unknown in religious life (and which, by the way, I never used again); I might say 'pleasure' if I liked!

"It was not long before I discovered how truly hers was a life of prayer, and how highly she valued the prayers of others. I remember her asking me to pray for her one evening not long after I entered the noviceship. I immediately replied, 'Oh, indeed, Rev. Mother, I will not!' thinking she was letting herself down very much, and being quite convinced she did not want my spiritual help. 'My dear,' she answered in an impressive manner, 'whenever people ask you to pray for them always say you will, for it is their guardian angel that

inspires them to do so.' The last day alone will reveal what people owe to her own prayers, and to those which she got others to offer for them. Poor Sister Monica would often have to kneel down at a little altar in Rev. Mother's room, and pray for stray sheep—some father or brother, perhaps, of one of the nuns, who had neglected the service of God in the midst of the cares or the prosperity of the world. Monica would be desired to kneel down and offer up for such and such a case, a Rosary of the *Salva Regina*. This was a favourite devotion of the Mother's own, but I do not remember her asking any one to use it except Sister Monica, whose prayers, as those of a very holy soul, she had great confidence in.

"It used to fill me with amazement, to see the amount of toil of one kind or another gone through by persons in such habitually delicate health as Rev. Mother, and Mother Mary Lucy, and Sister M. C. The latter, after years of pulmonary disease, and having been utterly despaired of, regained her strength in a great degree, but the others spun out their lives in suffering. And there were many besides these in the congregation who were constantly in bad health. This did not arise from want of care, for nothing was spared for the sick. We used to remark in our young days of religious life, that delicacy of health seemed to belong to superiority; and we used to hint to each other that such and such sisters were being *qualified* for an important post when we saw them habitually suffering. At one time I remember every superior, with the exception of one or two, was a sufferer; and yet their labours and their houses were blest with success and an enlarged sphere of duty. Rev. Mother often spoke of what can be done for the good of others, and for God's glory, by those who are themselves sufferers. About this time, as it afterwards appeared, a sorrow was weighing heavily upon her which she kept from the knowledge of all the sisters but two, and this was the appearance of cancer suddenly developed in one of the most important members of the congregation. The danger seems to have been almost miraculously suspended; for the cancerous tumour (or what was with good reason supposed cancerous) remained for the twenty-eight years during which that most valuable life was preserved.

"If I were required to summarise in one short sentence the character of our ever dear mother and foundress, I think I should do so in the words of a venerable ecclesiastic, who has held in Ireland the highest offices in the religious Order to which he belongs, and who knew Mrs. Aikenhead intimately from the time of the foundation in Cork to the date of her death. When asked what impression she had made on him, he replied: 'she was a woman to be revered and loved; gifted with high spiritual knowledge and proficiency; sometimes *brusque*, perhaps, in manner, but making you understand that honesty was the great point with her. Looking like what she was—the foun-

dress of a great institute—she reminded me of St. Teresa, or of St. Catherine of Siena, *with a dash of the Celtic nature.*' "

In 1852, Mrs. Aikenhead sustained the greatest loss that could have befallen her, in the death of her true friend and father, the founder of the Irish Sisters of Charity. Dr. Murray had nearly completed his eighty-fourth year, and though still his form was erect and his step almost elastic, age had, of course, told on him in many ways. Full to the last of the quiet energy which had always distinguished him, and displaying the same suavity of manner and the same considerateness for others that had characterised his youth and vigorous manhood, he yet was fully aware that his days were well-nigh numbered, and calmly and courageously awaited the summons. Truly, he may have sighed for rest after the prolonged and toilsome journey; and yet, in the retrospect, how trifling must have seemed the trials and troubles of his earthly course, and how his heart must have glowed with gratitude in remembering the blessings which had tracked his way, and the changes which Divine Providence had, within a period of fifty or sixty years, brought about in the condition of the people and the external position of the Church, which had come forth from their hiding holes. Even the outer aspect of his own diocese showed how signal that resurrection had been. At the time when he received his episcopal appointment, as his biographer tells us, with the exception of the Church of St. Teresa, lately erected in Clarendon-street, there was not a decent place of Catholic worship within the walls of Dublin; while the chapels, such as they were, crouched in the darkest and most loathsome lanes and alleys of the city. The education of the Catholic youth of all ranks was almost exclusively in the hands of Protestants. There was one good school for poor girls—that of the Presentation nuns at George's Hill; and there were one or two for boys of the same class instituted and maintained by Dr. Betagh. The poor were dependent on precarious and unorganised charity; there were neither religious congregations nor secular associations devoted to their comfort in sickness and their relief in destitution. Before the archbishop died ninety-seven churches, great and small, had been erected in the diocese, at an expense of little less than £700,000. In every parish many schools had been built by the people themselves at no small cost. The Brothers of the Christian schools had a vast establishment in Dublin. Three new congregations of women had been founded by his Grace, and there were twenty-nine communities devoted principally to the care of the poor, and the education of youth. The Gentlemen's Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Ladies' Association of Charity, were in active work relieving the sick and destitute, while the Vincentian Fathers, the Society of Jesus, and the Loretto nuns had undertaken the education of the higher classes. Nay more, as if to prove that the self-devotion of

the children of St. Patrick knew no bounds, the Missionary College of All Hallows was founded to train and send forth a constantly recruited band of Levites to preach the Gospel in other countries; while a branch of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith was established, to aid with its prayers and contributions the missioners of all nations who labour to extend the kingdom of Christ on earth. It has been estimated that the amount of property, movable and immovable, acquired by religion in the archbishopric of Dublin during Dr. Murray's incumbency considerably exceeded £1,200,000. In the metropolitan parish of St. Mary £27,000 were subscribed for the erection of churches alone, and £15,000 for the education of the poor. One does not, perhaps, so much wonder at the generous willingness of the people to effect this stupendous work of reconstruction, for they are proverbially large of heart and open of hand; but it seems almost miraculous that so large an amount could be collected, considering the impoverished condition of the Catholic body, and the constraint they were under of supporting at the same time their own Church and the Protestant Establishment. Many indeed were the changes and great the deeds witnessed by Daniel Murray, who, born under the full rigour of the penal code, saw the fetters of the long-suffering Catholics struck off one by one; and lived to take part in the deliberations of the Synod of Thurles—the first national synod summoned to meet in Ireland since 1642, when the Papal Nuncio, Rinuncini, presided at a council of the prelates held in the City of Kilkenny in that momentous year.[1]

On the 23rd of February, 1852, Dr. Murray presided at the solemn office for the repose of the soul of Richard Lalor Sheil, which was held in the church of the Jesuit Fathers in Dublin, where the remains of the orator rested on their journey from Florence to the family burial place in Tipperary. In the evening the archbishop dined with the Rev. Thomas Pope and a number of lay and clerical friends at the presbytery, in Marlborough-street, on which occasion he appeared to be in his usual health and spirits. Next morning—Shrove Tuesday—he rose at an early hour, and before celebrating the Holy Sacrifice in his oratory went down to the drawingroom for the altar wine. Mrs. O'Brien, who enjoyed the privilege of hearing Mass in the oratory, was waiting to speak on some business to his Grace; and as he passed in she noticed that he rubbed his hands in a peculiar way, and asked was he in pain. He replied that he was, and at the same moment she saw his countenance change, and had just time to place a chair behind him when he sank into it in a fit of apoplexy. Paralysis ensued immediately. Dr. O'Ferrall, who had been for many years the archbishop's physician, was immediately sent for. He came without delay

1 For these and other statistics, see Monsignor Meagher's "Life of Archbishop Murray," and the *Freeman* "Church Commission" (Diocese of Dublin).

but found the powers of life so weak that he would not allow his patient to he carried to his bedroom. A stretcher was put up in the back drawingroom, and the archbishop was laid on the bed. Soon after this the surgeon-general arrived. A blister was applied to the head, nothing more could be done. The patient could not swallow, he was dying, and the sacrament of Extreme Unction was administered. As soon as Mrs. Aikenhead heard of the illness of the archbishop she sent Mrs. MacCarthy and another nun to his residence in Mountjoy-square, to see if they could be of any service. There they spent the greater part of the days during which he remained in a sort of stupor, but free from all pain as the doctors assured the sisters.

All this while, that is from eight o'clock on Tuesday morning till five o'clock on the following Thursday morning every one who wished to do so was allowed to go up and pass through the front drawing-room to the back room—the folding doors standing open between the apartments. It was a most solemn scene. On each side of the dying prelate's bed knelt one of his vicars, alternately repeating the Church prayers for the agonising, and every quarter of an hour giving the last absolution. The provincials of the different religious bodies came to impart to him the indulgences of their respective Orders. Mrs. O'Brien knelt like a statue at the side of the bed, and two of the Sisters of Charity knelt at the foot. The most intimate friends passed one another without a sign of recognition, and when they had satisfied their devotion and offered a heartfelt prayer, retired in perfect silence.

When death at length approached, about half-past five o'clock on Thursday morning, one of the attendant priests "opening at once the Holy Gospels, commenced reading aloud the 'passion' from St. John; while all others present threw themselves on their knees in supplication to heaven for the illustrious spirit hastening on its eternal path. After the lapse of some moments, to the amazement of them all, the archbishop was distinctly seen to raise, under the bed covering, his right hand, which all through had been paralysed, and to move it, as if imparting his episcopal benediction to those around, and then passing it over his bosom laid it tranquilly on his heart. Meanwhile the 'sacred passion' was being recited, and just as the priest had finished the Redeemer's parting exclamation 'Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit,' the earthly course of this great pontiff terminated!"

The body of the archbishop was, according as the Roman Pontifical directs, embalmed, and then laid out in full pontificals, with the sacred pallium, the sign of the archiepiscopal office, on a high catafalque which was surrounded with candles. The vestments were purple cloth of gold. The jewelled mitre, the pectoral cross and the crozier, lay beside the body, and the hands covered with white embroidered gloves were joined as in prayer. As the catafalque was very much slanted from head to foot, the entire figure was fully

seen. The expression of the countenance was heavenly in its majestic beauty. Everyone was allowed to go up as on the previous days. A Protestant gentleman on descending the stairs was overheard saying to the lady who accompanied him: "He just looks what I always thought him, a saint." During the whole time the archbishop lay in state, a priest in soutane and surplice, seated at a high reading-desk at the foot of the catafalque, repeated aloud the Church office appointed for the occasion; and each evening a number of the Fathers of the different Orders dressed in their habits came to recite the Office of the Dead in choir. Temporary altars were erected in the apartment and on these the Holy Sacrifice was offered on the mornings preceding the funeral. The remains, enclosed in a coffin on which rested the mitre, crozier, and cross, were carried on Sunday afternoon followed by an immense multitude to the cathedral and laid before the high altar. Next morning Masses were offered up from dawn till noon at altars erected from one end of the Church to the other; and on Tuesday, the 2nd day of March, the last funeral rites were celebrated with extraordinary solemnity. The Primate of Armagh, the Archbishop of Cashel, the three suffragan bishops of Leinster, and nine other prelates assisted at the requiem office. Finally, the earthly relics of the saintly archbishop were laid in the vaults of the cathedral beside the remains of Dr. Troy, his predecessor in the see of Dublin.

Dr. Murray died as he had lived, poor in all but grace and virtue. The very house he lived in had been purchased for him by a few friends; even the common comforts of his daily life and the maintenance of a necessary establishment were looked to by personal friends. Whatever sums of money were placed at his disposal, seemed only to touch his hand for a blessing ere their distribution. A priest who used to go with the dues to the archbishop relates that the latter would ask him how a certain school was going on, and having listened to the reply, would say: "Well, now, take that for it," handing him back a part of the dues. Then he would inquire about some other good work, and follow up the inquiry with another donation; and thus proceed until nearly all the money had disappeared. But though the archbishop had not much of the world's wealth to leave behind him, he still had wherewithal to bestow as a parting gift on some of the charitable institutions which were dear to him, as for instance St. Vincent's hospital and the House of Refuge in Stanhope-street. Among his effects was found a little box sealed and directed, "For Mrs. Mary Aikenhead." This box contained 100 guineas, and the gift was simply intended as a little mark of friendship.

How deeply Mrs. Aikenhead mourned for the loss of her life-long friend, the founder and powerful protector of the congregation, will best be told in the words of Mother M. I., to whom we are already so

much indebted for a graphic portraiture of the Rev. Mother in earlier days than those in which she had to bear this loss and sorrow. "On the death of our founder, Archbishop Murray, which naturally was an overpowering blow to Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead, I went to spend the day with her, as she had sent all our mothers to the house of mourning to render their services to the deceased venerated prelate. She remained alone, being unable to go. I found her in bitter agony, her head bent down in humble submission to the decree of an all-wise Providence; but not a word escaped expressive of her grief or interior feelings. To say nothing of her deep respect and affection for this holy man, he was the father and founder of her congregation. She at once threw herself and all dear to her on the 'sweet Providence of God,' trusting Him with unbounded confidence. Her nature was tender in the extreme. I made some remark on the dear deceased, which instantly drew forth a burst of tears of natural grief; and as if this had been against her will, she said: 'My child, do not be disedified, nor imagine I am not perfectly conformed to God's holy will and divine ordination; but poor nature must have its way.'"

Mrs. Aikenhead wrote herself to the rectress at Waterford to announce to her the sad intelligence of the archbishop's illness, giving in the simplest words the account of the fatal seizure, and preserving a tone of calm fortitude. On the archbishop's death, she thus writes to the superior at Cork:—

"Ere now, I think, you will have learned that our Almighty Father has called out of this life our dear honoured founder and father. It is needless to express that our affliction is as deep as it is unspeakably great, and extends throughout the archdiocese. Only one word shall I say—that we who knew the venerated departed are impressed with thankfulness for every dispensation of the ever wise and sweet Providence of our heavenly Father in all the circumstances which accompanied our loss. Ever love and adore His most holy will. Amen." Then follow some business matters, and at the conclusion of her letter she says: "I beg of you to get special prayers for our archdiocese, our dear Irish Church, and, we ought to add, our own special necessities. Here I have desired the invocation of the Holy Ghost as at the commencement of the litanies, the Memorare Prayer of St. Michael and the Collect of St. Joseph. So join in these if you can. I have written in great haste, as I have to add a little word in many notes to our houses. I wish to tell you that Father Russell gave me a truly charitable, cordial, and most useful visit yesterday. May our Lord reward him!

A year and a half later she thus writes to Waterford, on receiving intelligence of the safe arrival at that convent of a portrait bust of Dr. Murray:—

"Thank you for your very cordial letter of thanks for the bust of our ever venerated departed dear father and founder; and be assured, my dear child, that finding yourself and the dear sisters valuing this vestige of an image of our departed father is the most gratifying feeling (next to seeing or knowing you all and each to be making thorough progress in love of God) that you could impart to me."

On the 3rd of May following, the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen, Primate and Archbishop of Armagh, was translated to the see of Dublin, and hence became the ecclesiastical superior of the Sisters of Charity. "Immediately on his installation," say the Annals, "our dear Rev. Mother wrote to him 'throwing herself and the congregation at his feet,' as she expressed it. These her sentiments were admitted by his Grace with such entire good faith in the sincerity with which they had been formed, that from that moment Dr. Cullen became our protector and friend; and nothing has ever arisen to cast a shade of mistrust on the entire confidence which exists between the ecclesiastical superior and the congregation."

As years passed on, the accommodation which the novitiate house afforded proved insufficient for the members applying for admission into the congregation, and it became necessary to build. Mrs. Aikenhead, who always felt distressed that there should be cells over the chapel at Our Lady's Mount, and longed for an opportunity of providing a suitable dwelling for the Most Holy Sacrament, thought the time had now come for her to build a little church. When this should be done the large room hitherto used as a chapel and the adjoining sacristy could be arranged to give the required accommodation, namely, a fine room for a noviceship, and space for ten additional beds. There were no funds in hands for the erection of the little church, but some money was expected to come in, which Mrs. Aikenhead thought she might devote to the purpose. She procured plans and arranged for the commencement of the undertaking with her usual courage and reliance on Divine Providence. The foundation stone was laid by the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen on the 18th of March, the feast of the Archangel Gabriel, 1857. As the building progressed funds came in; and though the church was not fit for divine service till after the Rev. Mother had gone to receive her reward, she had yet the comfort of knowing that she had "built a house to the name of the Lord God of Israel."

A marble altar had always been her ideal of what was suitable in the house of God, and she had often wished to be able to erect one in a chapel of the Sisters of Charity. One day a light dawned on her, and she saw how it would be possible for her to procure what she had so greatly desired. The 100 guineas bequeathed to her by Archbishop Murray were still untouched, and she resolved to devote the sum to the erection of the marble altar. This mode of disposing of the money, offered, as she considered, two advantages: first, it procured for the Most High what was most costly in point of material; and, secondly, it would be a lasting monument to the memory of the founder of the Sisters of Charity. But the congregation found a third advantage in this mode of appropriating the legacy of the archbishop, for they were aware that in the inscription on the back of the altar the

names of both its founders could be associated in a way that would perpetuate their memory: as it imports that the altar was erected by the Rev. Mother Mary Aikenhead to the memory of the Most Rev. Daniel Murray with the 100 guineas he bequeathed to her.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MODEL SCHOOLS—A LIFE-LONG FRIEND—MOTHER CATHERINE'S LAST DAYS.

MEANWHILE the poor schools in Gardiner-street had been brought to a state of admirable efficiency. The trouble taken in organising the system of instruction carried on in that institution had produced the happiest results, and under Sister Mary Xavier Hennessy's intelligent supervision the moral discipline was as near perfection as could be, and order reigned in every department. Indeed, Mrs. Hennessy's reputation extended far and wide, and not unfrequently bishops and distinguished men from England, interested in education, came to the convent to talk over systems and practical details with her. As a head-organiser her services were in demand to set the schools in working order wherever new foundations were made by the congregation. The Presentation nuns at Rahan begged of Mrs. Aikenhead to allow them the advantage of Sister M. Xavier's advice and experience in bringing their schools up to the required standard, and the Rev. Mother having granted the request of her old friends, Mrs. Hennessy made a journey to the King's County and introduced the Gardiner-street system as far as was possible in the classes at the convent schools.

A considerable improvement was made in 1853 by the addition of a fourth school-room to the Gardiner-street premises. Miss Denis, who had built the infant school, also contributed largely to this addition, which should properly be designated the "second school," but was called by the children themselves "the top infants'" because to it were drafted from the infant school all who had completed their seventh year. The rest of the funds were supplied by a charity sermon, a raffle, some small bequests, and a grant from the congregation.

This generous help to the Gardiner-street institution was one of the last acts of munificence performed by one whose life had been spent in doing good, and whose purse was always open to the poor. Miss Denis died in the following year. This good lady was, as we have seen, among the earliest friends of the congregation, and through life she continued one of its most liberal benefactors. In youth she had, it appears, a great desire to enter the noviceship; but her mother

so resolutely opposed the step, that Miss Denis was advised to abandon the idea for a time. Seeing that she had so far gained her point Mrs. Denis resolved so to dispose matters as to make it at least improbable that her daughter would enter religion even at a later period. She therefore went systematically to work, saying she would, during her own life, give Matilda so much of her will that she would never consent to relinquish it to anyone, even when she should have become her own mistress on her mother's death. And so in fact it turned out—when Miss Denis was free all desire for the convent was gone. She devoted her life to works of charity. Her house was seldom without some clerical friend, and Father Kenny had always rooms in it at his command. She was one of the ladies of the committee of the House of Refuge, and she contributed largely and regularly to the support of the community of Stanhope-street (the novitiate) until the congregation was in a position to secure its maintenance. In the summer of 1854 she became very ill, and it soon appeared that the good old lady's days were nearly numbered. Mrs. Aikenhead, writing to the superior of one of her convents says :—

"I am very desirous to procure your fervent prayers and those of the sisters for the dear soul of one of my oldest friends, who has also a real claim on the prayers of each and all of our congregation, for she is a very great benefactress—indeed one of our actual foundresses—dear Matilda Denis, whose death is, I am told, hourly expected. So, my dear, I beg that prayer may be specially offered, as it may be in time to assist her pious, charitable soul in its greatest necessity, for it may yet be that she may survive for some days; but also she may depart very speedily. Of course we shall write to ask all the best prayers we can procure when the precious soul shall have departed.

"I wrote a cordial little note to this dear friend on Saturday last, supposing her to be actually recovered from a bad attack of influenza. She has been down to Kingstown for some weeks past. I had an affectionate message from her since, telling me that as soon as she could recover a little more strength she would write to me. This morning our Doctor Bellingham, who is married to her niece, gave the report which urges me to write to obtain the charity, indeed the duty, I request of all."

A few days later, namely, on the 25th of July, Mrs. Aikenhead writes again :—

"This is the third time I have sat down to write, and already there has arrived an interruption which, being in the shape of a rather lengthy letter of consultation, requiring a reply, required of me to satisfy myself with giving you a very hasty note just to perform an act of duty, that is to procure all the prayers, &c., &c., you can for the precious soul of our esteemed friend and benefactress, Matilda Denis, who breathed her last about noon on last Sunday, the 23rd of July. R.I.P. I think we are called on to appoint for this dear soul the full amount of suffrages as are appointed by the institute for '*a sister* who dies in *another house*.' I did not know of Miss Denis's demise until late on Sunday evening. Our dear Mother rectress had an

interview with Dr. Bellingham at St. Vincent's hospital on Sunday morning before her leaving home to come hither. He told her that Miss Denis was perfectly conscious and knew all who surrounded her by voice. We had learned that her sight had failed on Friday, and he said that she had spent the night before awake and reciting, as he called them, most beautiful prayers. I was indeed truly comforted by learning that Rev. Father Esmonde continued the most unremitting attendance on Miss Denis during her entire illness. I well know what happiness this afforded her. R.I.P. Amen. Since the last was over in this life I have not heard any report, and am not aware whether the interment has taken place nor where it is to be."

The Gardiner-street convent, which long enjoyed the distinction of having the best schools, was also looked upon as the great mission-house of the congregation. The visitation of the sick in their homes was carried on with untiring devotion by the community; relief was given at the convent to a number of the deserving poor; and in an apartment called the dispensary, adjoining the school and entered by a door opening into the lane that runs at the side of the buildings, many destitute creatures, young and old, were set down to a morning or a mid-day meal. The convent had become a centre of charitable work; the poor repaired thither for assistance in urgent distress, the rich resorted thither bringing their gifts, and making the sisters the dispensers of their charity: the afflicted, both rich and poor, carried their tales of sorrow to pour them into Mother Catherine's bosom, and to receive from her the strengthening and the consoling word which no one else seemed so well able to bestow. Mother Catherine was in truth the presiding genius of that house; she was the *beau ideal* of a Sister of Charity—she was charity personified. The reverse of those who were condemned by St. James for saying, "Go and be warmed and fed," and yet giving no aid; *she* was helpful to all. When the poor in their want or their sorrow came to the convent door, Mother Catherine had ever a welcome for them; she would bring them into the parlour and make them sit beside her on the sofa—a proceeding which did not meet with the approval of some who thought that neither the sofa nor the mother's garments would be improved by this close contact. She would hear out their sad stories to the end, and then send them away with food, and clothing, and money, and comforted hearts. If persons of high distinction came, as they frequently did, to pour their sorrows into her sympathising ear, it was remarked that no matter how downcast and sad they looked in coming, they went away cheered and softened and consoled, saying to the sister who opened the door "she is an angel!" The clergy knew her well, and, the younger priests especially valued every opportunity of having a few words with her. One of these friends has said that Mother Catherine could give excellent advice even to a priest, and that after visiting her he used to come away with his soul full of joy.

Even in old age she had a beautiful and engaging countenance which no painter could do justice to, and a most winning manner. When she entered any of the school-rooms the children uttered a cry of delight. Her conversation was delightful, and goodness broke out in it so naturally that while she cheered those whom she spoke to, she left an impression on their minds which was elevating in the highest degree and not easily forgotten. They felt that a saint had spoken to them. Her manner of encouraging and consoling those who came to her was so simple and so effectual as to seem peculiar to herself. In fact it was her holiness that did the work; gave strange efficacy to her words, and so impressed others with its sympathetic power that their hearts began to change even while their lips were expressing disconsolate, repining, or perhaps angry thoughts. A lady relates that she went on one occasion to Mother Catherine and enumerated at considerable length her various trials and grievances. The dear Mother listened to her patiently, and then looking at her with one of her sweet smiles, told her that our Divine Lord had so much love for her that, with His hand wide open, He offered her diamonds, rubies, and pearls to enrich and adorn her soul, but that she declined the gifts like a wayward child, and turned aside, thus verifying His own words :—"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The effect produced on her by these simple words was, she said, almost miraculous. Her feelings became subdued and her mind enlightened, so that she understood the value of the cross and willingly took up again the share that was apportioned for her to bear.

Mother Catherine's sweet calm manner never varied, even when holy zeal might seem to justify some warmth of expression, and this no doubt had a soothing effect on the troubled hearts that laid bare their wounds before her. A poor widow once came to complain that her only son was about to quit her and his two sisters, and instead of staying at home and assisting them to carry on the little business they were engaged in, he was going to engage in a merchant vessel because he had, forsooth, a great desire to go round the world! Mother Catherine quietly replied that perhaps it was the best thing for him, as might yet appear; and told the poor woman to pray earnestly to Almighty God and put her trust in Him. The youth set out, and after some time his mother received a letter from him written at a foreign port. What was her joy to find that he had become totally altered during the voyage. God, he said, spoke to his heart through the expanse of the heavens; he made an entire offering of himself to Him; and then began to consider what he could do to promote the divine glory. It came into his mind that he might try to reform some of the sailors, and he began by talking to two or three whom he prevailed on to say their morning and night prayers, to give up cursing,

and so on. After a short time a few more joined their party, he taught them the catechism, and on Sundays read the prayers at Mass with them. All this was done with the full approbation of the captain of the vessel, who seemed quite pleased with the great improvement he observed in the men. At length the vessel anchored in an Italian port, and the sailors were occasionally allowed to go on shore during the ten days their ship was in harbour. The opportunity was gladly availed of by the young man and his friends to approach the sacraments. The happiness thence resulting was, he said, greater than words could tell. He expressed contrition for any displeasure he had occasioned his mother, and rejoiced to tell her that there was every prospect of their meeting soon. The now happy mother of course attributed all these blessings to the power of Mother Catherine's prayers, and she lost no time in presenting herself with a glad heart before one who, like St. Paul, knew how to rejoice with those who rejoiced.

Mother Catherine was particularly charitable in relieving the distress of reduced gentle folk, and it was wonderful how many families were kept from utter ruin by her means, during the fearful crisis which involved the once comfortable classes in the calamities that overwhelmed the peasant population of Ireland. She was enabled to do this by the liberal alms poured into her hands for distribution. She was trusted as well as loved by all ranks, so that she was the comforter of sorrows hidden from the world; the friend in need of many who perhaps would let none other know how want consumed their lives; and the depository of the secret alms of men who let not the right hand know what the left hand did. If the world were upbraided for its ostentatious charity, Mother Catherine might rise up to prove the existence in a hundred cases of a diametrically opposite spirit. There was one rich young man who was commonly accused of parsimony, and yet many a time he came to Mother Catherine at dusk and gave her large sums—twenty or forty pounds, perhaps—for the poor. He would then ask the mother's blessing; she would give it affectionately, and he would depart quite happy, and free from the embarrassments of human praise. Mother Catherine distributed carefully and wisely the alms that were entrusted to her, but she kept no regular accounts. All we know is that the good done through her was incalculable.

It may well be supposed that whenever this great friend of the afflicted, this "mother of the poor," became ill, the universal grief was inexpressible. At one time when she was sick unto death her medical adviser, Dr. O'Beirne, called in Sir Philip Crampton. They had given up all hope of her recovery, when on coming to the convent one morning the physicians were astonished to find that a wonderful improvement had taken place in their patient. "It is miraculous,"

said Sir Philip, as they went down stairs. "Ah," replied the other, "if you only knew how many Masses were offered for that woman!"

Mother Catherine's prayers were almost as much sought for as her alms; and her advice and opinion on difficult subjects were highly valued. Not many years before her death a young lady who was about to enter religion but was divided in her mind, and knew not which Order to choose after visiting many convents both in this country and in England, told her difficulty to a priest with whom she was acquainted. "Well," he said, "I will introduce you to a friend of mine who will be able to throw some light on your way. She is a remarkably holy person, and receives great light in prayer. Consult her on the subject." He brought or sent the lady to Mother Catherine, who solved her doubts and showed her that she was to be a Sister of Charity. Soon after this she entered the noviceship. When the time of her profession drew near Mother Catherine said in the course of a conversation with the sister's mother: "What would you think if Mary were sent here?" "Oh, Mother Catherine," she answered, "how happy it would make me to think she was with you!" "No," returned Mother Catherine, "not *with* me, but *after* me, and in my place." The family looked on this as a prophecy In course of time the sister was sent as superior to one of the country convents, and her brother, a Jesuit in England, hearing of this wrote home asking: "What then has become of Mother Catherine's prophecy?" A little later Mother Catherine died, and then after a few months the young superior was summoned from her sorrowing little flock in the country to fill the vacant place in Gardiner-street.

But Mother Catherine never looked more beautiful nor was more truly the mother than in the midst of her own community. The sisters, her children, loved her exceedingly. She was all tenderness —"hard to herself but kind to others." If by chance she said a word which she afterwards thought was capable of giving pain, or over-hasty, or uncalled for, she would go to the sister's room before retiring for the night to beg her forgiveness; and this when she was superior. Not that she would under any circumstances pass things over that needed correction; but she had a way of giving a lesson without hurting the most sensitive. For instance, a novice who was under her care one day came "tearing down stairs," as the children of the school would say, in anything but a nun-like fashion. "Go up now, my child," said Mother Catherine, "and show me how a nice young novice who is keeping her rule would come down stairs!" The novices and the professed alike delighted in being with Mother Catherine, and it was a more than common trial to be transferred from Gardiner-street to another house. What was felt on these occasions is touchingly expressed in a letter written by one of Mother Catherine's community to her sister, announcing that she was about to

leave. The writer, Sister M. Vincent, knew that her family, to whom Mother Catherine was no stranger, would be grieved on her account. She simply tells them she is going to another house in time for the annual retreat which is to take place there, and mentions the place to which she is likely to be sent after that. She then continues:—

"And let me beg that none of you will think anything of it, nor give yourselves the least uneasiness about it; for *I* the person actually concerned am satisfied. I do not deny that I feel leaving this holy house, and a fond, fond mother, whose only aim from morning till night is to meet the *smallest* wishes of each who has the happiness of living with her. Oh, my dearest Margaret, you think you know her, but you should live with her to know her at all. If I could tell you the inventions of her kindness to make me feel less the pain of going! But even you know very well how foolish it would have been for me to set my heart on staying here, or even to think such a thing could be. Why should I be exempt from anything to which others are subject? God orders it for my *greater* good, for He has ever shown a most marked care of me, not merely watching me with the eye of His holy Providence, but as it were carrying me in His very arms; so that things which at the time were very unpleasant proved the most singular acts of His loving kindness. My stay is spoken of as 'for a while,' so that I may be back again; but even though this may not be the case, I feel I have good reason to bless God *all* my life for letting me stay here even as long as I have been here."

Sister Mary Vincent after having been for some time assistant in the noviceship (in Stanhope-street) did return to spend the last days of her short life and to die happily, as already mentioned, under the loving care of Mother Catherine.

Here is the testimony to Mother Catherine's goodness as placed on record by those who had the happiness of living under her government:—

"She was a model to us in everything—in piety, humility, charity, obedience, mortification, and devotedness to the poor. Whatever was troublesome or laborious she took for her portion. Thus, till long after her seventieth year she continued to call the community at five o'clock in the morning, and to give the Benedicamus at ten o'clock at night when all had retired to rest; and after she had been induced to relinquish the latter duty as a habit, she was on the look-out for an occasion of exercising it by replacing any sister who from indisposition had retired early and whose turn it might be to give it.

"She was the great charm of our recreations: she used to meet us with such a loving welcome, and delight us with anecdotes. Everything she said had interest in it, and her manner was so playful. Once that a sister was relating how she had had to support a dying person in her arms, Mother Catherine said: 'Oh, sister, how the angels must have envied you!' which little word did more to exalt our holy state in the mind of that sister than a whole treatise written on it. She used to speak with much sympathy of the sufferings of

the poor; and once gave a grave reprimand to a sister who on being asked who was at the door replied it was *only* a poor person.

"When the sisters returned from the mission wet and weary she would meet them with the greatest concern; one time relieving them of their wet cloaks and shoes, and taking them to dry; at another time taking their turn to read at dinner, &c. If she feared that a sister would not take what was necessary for her at dinner, she would carve a portion and send it to her, with an order to eat it.

"She used to say that true charity was universal; and on that principle she would never allow the lottery tickets of the house she governed to be put in circulation, till she knew that the other houses had finished their distribution; so that one should not interfere with another, nor that even the *appearance* of rivalry should exist."

Mother Catherine's disinterestedness did not, however, stop there. Whenever occasion served, she would bring prominently forward the merits and wants of all the other houses of the congregation, observing how great were their responsibilities in having inmates to provide for in all respects, "while we," she would say, "are not expected to give more than we receive." A lady who had rather recently made her acquaintance, hearing her expatiate on the perfect manner in which laundry business was done in the institutions of the Sisters of Charity, imagined that Mother Catherine herself was in some way or another connected with that department of industrial work. Accordingly, she sent to Gardiner-street several articles of under-clothing of the finest description without giving any particular directions about them. Mother Catherine, supposing from their being sent to her convent that they were meant for the benefit of the poor, began to consider how they might be disposed of for that purpose, and consulted the sisters on the subject. However, as none of them knew any one who would be able or inclined to purchase such superfine articles, it was concluded that it would be better to wait until some opportunity might offer of effecting the desired sale. Luckily the lady presented herself next day to give directions about making up the clothes, and Mother Catherine thanked God with all her heart that she had not been guilty of a grievous mistake by disposing of the lady's fine *trousseau*.

For the last three or four years of her life Mother Catherine was more or less an invalid. She had frequent though slight attacks of paralysis. Of this she was not aware. She attributed the little falls she got to some accident or another; such as a mat having tripped her, or her habit having caught in something. Little by little her limbs began to fail; then her speech became embarrassed: the right expression did not come, and a slight blush would overspread her face as some kind friend or dear sister suggested the missing word. Eventually utterance failed altogether, though the intellect remained clear. For many months before her death she could only go to

confession by replying to the confessor's questions with a negative or affirmative gesture. But when the Most Holy was brought into her room to give her communion, the deep reverence and joy depicted on her countenance, and her gentle moans were clear indications of her desire to welcome her Divine Guest. At this time the constant and ever-zealous friend of the congregation, Father Russell of the Order of Preachers, came to the help of the Gardiner-street community, who were in a state of considerable embarrassment owing to their having no chaplain in so sad a crisis. Mrs. Aikenhead thus speaks in grateful terms of her obligations to this friend in need. She says:—

"I saw Rev. Father Russell on the day after his return; and I must tell you that I had sent for him, being in a very trying emergency. He has been most kind, and I find that he lost no time in granting what must under any circumstances be valued as a very great favour. Under our present state I could not receive a more special blessing. He celebrated the Holy Sacrifice at our little altar in Gardiner-street, and promises to supply our urgent need there for a while at least. This is required by the *very* apparent declining state of dear Mother Catherine."

As time wore on, the condition of the poor invalid became still more painful, and it was not without difficulty that the priest administered the Holy Communion, for the tongue could scarcely be moved. "I cannot say for this dear soul," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "more than that she lives, and, as we fear, she suffers, at least the poor almost dead body *does*. We ought to pray incessantly." Again she says, some months later:—

"Our dear Mother Catherine's state continues without change in any degree which could promise even partial amendment. However, we have to be grateful, for in a wonderful manner she has been relieved from one point of suffering—the sores on her back and hips seem to be healed, and not suddenly, but they now cease to trouble her. However, no change as to the effects of the paralysis. She cannot move herself, nor articulate in the least degree, so aid her by prayer."

Towards the close, Mother Catherine's sufferings were so great that an idea began to prevail that she must have prayed to fulfil her purgatory in this life. It struck one with awe to think of that tongue being thus silenced which had spoken strong and consoling words so often to the trembling and saddened heart: to think of that sympathetic helpful soul being now in its utmost need cut off from all ordinary succour. But, in the intensity and duration of her suffering, she bore a resemblance to the saint of Siena whose name she bore and who was her patron and her model:—

"Dear mother-assistant was obliged," writes Mrs. Aikenhead, "to go to our house in Gardiner-street the last three days to hold the place of the superior. Indeed, from the report she brought last evening we have reason

to expect that a final close to poor dear Mother Catherine's sufferings may soon ensue. However, as her state has been all along peculiar, we cannot speak with any degree of certainty. But this much is certain, that we are all called on to persevere in frequent acts of fervent petition and every charitable assistance we can procure for this dear, ancient, and zealously edifying mother, and fervent servant of the poor, for whose relief she was ever-earnestly solicitous. I think I before observed to you that we have an idea that in the mysterious appointments of our Almighty Father, this dear soul is left to endure her purgatory in this world—and, indeed, my child, a very severe purgatory it is. I cannot bring to my mind that I was ever aware of our dear Mother Catherine being devoted to pray that she may have her purgatory in this life, yet I know that many pious persons are accustomed to do so. I do not condemn any, yet I feel that our perfectly committing all to the holy appointment of that *Divine Will*, is perhaps the best for those who feel the weakness of *poor* nature, and will be equally pleasing to our heavenly Father. I have said enough to urge all your charity in addition to your duty. As soon as you can, ask for the Holy Sacrifice to be celebrated for dear Mother Catherine."

About two months before Mother Catherine's death, at the earnest request of the Gardiner-street community, a rectress was appointed. At first the dear sick mother seemed greatly puzzled, and used to follow the newly-appointed superior with her eyes, as if trying to find out what brought her to the house. The truth dawned on her one day when she saw a sister who was in the room rise on the entrance of the rectress. As soon as the latter was near enough, Mother Catherine took her hand, kissed it, and bowed her head in token of obeisance. The new rectress was thirty-two years her junior.

On Christmas eve, 1854, Mother Catherine got a decided change for the worse and there were clear indications that her end was approaching. She received the last absolution that evening; and about nine o'clock on Christmas morning, surrounded by her community, and while the Passion of our Blessed Lord according to St. John was being read (the Church prayers for the agonising having previously been recited) she calmly breathed her last. She had always expressed a particular wish to die on Christmas day, and it pleased the Saviour to gratify His faithful spouse, the devoted friend of the poor, by acceding to her pious desire. The hour, too, was favourably appointed by that good God who "never forgets nor mistakes," and who "makes all things work together unto good," in favour of His servants: for there was just time to send to the parish church, as well as to that of the Jesuit fathers to bespeak all the Masses that were disengaged, for the eternal repose of the soul of Mother Catherine Walsh—the mother of the poor.

## CHAPTER V.

NEWS FROM ST. VINCENT'S—WAR NOTES—SHADES OF EVENING.

WHILE Mrs. Aikenhead, confined as we have seen to her rooms at Our Lady's Mount, felt all the cares of the different houses weighing heavily on her, yet amply sharing, too, in all their joys, it is tolerably certain that St. Vincent's Hospital was still the child of predilection. She had well provided for the institution by leaving in it as rectress the mother-assistant, Mrs. MacCarthy; and as the latter was in the habit of going to Harold's-cross every Saturday and remaining till Monday, the Rev. Mother was kept fully acquainted with hospital affairs. But indeed hardly a day passed without some communication between the mother-house and St. Vincent's. Mrs. Aikenhead took as much interest in the cases as if she had been watching by the bedside. The surgical operations were specially interesting to her. Many a fervent *Amen* she uttered for the poor patients and for the good doctors, on the days that serious operations were to be performed; and many a prayer Sister Monica was invited to offer up with the same intention, at the little altar in the Rev. Mother's room. Every thing connected with "the dear hospital" had a high value in the eyes of its foundress; its friends and benefactors, its present inmates and its former patients, its employés, were all regarded with a special tenderness; and if any of them got into trouble the Rev. Mother left no stone unturned to help them out of the difficulty. When it was the will of God to call any of them out of life, she did all that was then possible, and sent strong prevailing prayer with them to the judgment seat.

Emphatically she was, what her countrymen rate so highly—a good employer. Her just and considerate regard for those whose labour she engaged, naturally procured her good service in return; and this again obtained sincere appreciation from her. The following passage from a letter addressed to the superior of the Clonmel convent, shows her anxiety about two of the men employed at St. Vincent's who were ill. The first, named Murphy, had been hall porter at the hospital and was then dying; the other held a somewhat similar post:—

"Last evening I had a few lines from dear mother-assistant—still not allowed to leave her room; and poor soul her mind is worked with necessary solicitude by the state of poor Murphy, of whose restoration there

seems little hope. So, my dear, get all prayers to obtain every necessary spiritual help for him. Resignation to find the awful summons being expected is not easy to poor nature. We could not have experienced more fidelity than poor Murphy ever evinced. His loss will be a more perplexing affliction than many could even understand. And indeed I fear (though from youth he may make a little rally) that our second excellent hospital servant, John Lee, is only beginning to recover out of such a bad state of inflammation of the lungs, that we have every reason to dread he will never again be himself. A more useful, or more faithful, honest pair of men could not be desired, and really according to human calculations I know not how that weighty concern can be managed. This conviction must weigh on us both more than could be expressed, so you see we want prayers. Be sure to put up [the name of] poor Murphy that he may have fervent prayers from all in this his day of need."

St. Vincent's had early attracted the admiration and secured the help of many a worthy son of toil. Some, having once been patients, remained ever afterwards friends; others who knew that an acquaintance had been succoured there, also became friends; in many a way they all found means of helping the institution. It was not unusual to see at the hospital on certain Sundays, young men and old who, having collected penny-a-week subscriptions during the previous month from their fellow-tradesmen and their charitable neighbours, came to pour the little contributions into the treasury of the sick-poor. These penny collections began soon after the hospital was opened, and the proceeds for some time did not amount to more than a few pounds in the month. Gradually, the system becoming more extensively worked, larger returns were effected, and the monthly receipts from this source rose to between thirty and forty pounds. The good collectors did not always confine their services to the one department; they showed anxiety to help in any little way that came within their sphere; they looked on the hospital as in a great degree their own concern, and their friendly zeal was one of those things which specially delighted Mrs. Aikenhead.

A young man, Tom Fay by name, used to collect small sums for the hospital, and was a faithful ally of Sister M. C——, when she held a responsible post at St. Vincent's. One morning she saw him among the students in the doctor's train, at an hour when she knew that he ought to be at his master's business. "Tom," she said, "what are you doing here at this time of day?" "Ain't I gathering *squinkses* for the doctor!" replied he, with a knowing look and an air of delighted importance. The doctor it seems wished to have a few cases of squints, and Tom having come to know this, set about inviting individuals affected in that way to the hospital. He had succeeded in his efforts, and, bringing his specimens in triumph, naturally wished to see the result.

Tom would call now and then at the hospital, to inquire whether the sisters had heard of any new subscribers to add to his list. The

young members of the congregation he did not consider ardent enough in their zeal. "Now, look," he would say confidentially to Sister M. C., "them young ones are no use!"

Sister M. C., who was of a very delicate constitution and supposed to be in consumption, became after a time so ill that she could no longer walk down stairs, and had to be carried in a chair to the chapel. While this sad state of things lasted, poor Tom regularly made his appearance on the top flight every Sunday about Benediction hour, to help to carry the invalid to the chapel. "Who knows, Tom," she once said to him, "but that I may do as much for you one of those days." And so in fact it turned out. She got well, contrary to all expectation, and after some time Tom came as a patient to St. Vincent's. He was past recovery, and Sister M. C. in the end helped to carry the remains of her faithful friend from the ward where he died.

St. Vincent's book of receipts was of course a specially interesting volume to Mrs. Aikenhead. The numerous entries had oftentimes an interest quite apart from their money value—witnessing to the Providence of God and the generosity of the people, and showing how in proportion to the need the means increased. The first charity sermon for St. Vincent's produced £75 7*s.* 11*d.*, the next brought in £124 0*s.* 10*d.*, and for a series of years the collection on these occasions amounted to sums ranging between one and two hundred pounds. Christmas Eve donations increased gradually from £36 18*s.* 4*d.* to nearly £200, and occasionally surpassed that amount. In this book Mrs. Aikenhead had also abundant and touching proofs of the gratitude of the patients, who after their recovery and discharge often returned as visitors and benefactors, bringing a little gift of their own or the proceeds of a collection they had made for the institution in which they had been restored to health. Her eye constantly fell on such entries as—one of the patients, 5*s.*, a poor woman, 2*s.*, four patients, 10*s.*; and very often much larger sums—three or four pounds—would be acknowledged from humble friends. The confraternities of the city, and the trade associations, appeared, too, in the same category as subscribers of one pound, or more, annually; or as making thank-offerings for one of their body who had been received into St. Vincent's as a patient.

Names and places were strangely associated at times in the pages of that record of charity; as for instance:—the Commander of the Forces in Ireland; Dr. John Henry Newman (who when rector of the Catholic University sometimes said Mass in St. Vincent's); the Lord Chancellor; an archdeacon of the Church of England; Madame d'Abbadie, the mother of the great African travellers;[1] a French

[1] Madame d'Abbadie, whose maiden name was Susanna Thomson, was a native of Dublin, in which city her distinguished sons, Antoine Thomson, and Arnauld Michael, were

marquise; an "English Protestant;" a foreign "anonymous." Under the date of 1847, a strange entry was made in this wise:—"From the British Government, £25." Doubtless the Rev. Mother knew what this meant; but we can only surmise that the donation was from Lord Morpeth (afterwards Earl of Carlisle) who, whether officially connected with Ireland, or withdrawn into private life in England, was always a good friend and a liberal subscriber to St. Vincent's Hospital. More interesting still was this memorandum, in the year 1856:—"From the Duke of Leinster, on behalf of Lady Lucy Foley, £580." This was a legacy to Mrs. Aikenhead's hospital from the sister of Lord Edward Fitzgerald!

Lancashire sent several donations; subscribers (some Irish names among them) dated from London, Bath, Northumberland, and Edinburgh. Anonymous contributions of twenty, fifty, and one hundred pounds were frequently sent through the archbishop, Father St. Leger, and other friends. The crew of a pilot boat, the Odd Fellow's Society, the carmen's association, the sailors of Kingstown, from time to time dropped something into the purse of the sick-poor.

St. Vincent's was remembered under a variety of circumstances. Thus, for example, fines imposed at the police courts were sometimes directed to be paid to that institution; a person who got a reward for finding a gold watch brought the money to the same place; the translator of the "Conversion of Ratisbonne," gave the profits of the sale of the little book to the hospital; and the author of "Mores Catholici," directed that the proceeds of the sale of one of the volumes of that work should be forwarded to the Sisters of Charity, Stephen's-green.

Then came the names of Dr. O'Ferrall's pupils as they attended his lectures year after year at the hospital; and a goodly array of names they presented, and well did their fees swell out the receipts: for all went into St. Vincent's treasury. In the earlier period the legacies left to St. Vincent's were, generally speaking, neither large nor numerous; but old friends and subscribers usually left at their death some token of remembrance to the institution they had helped in life. Archbishop Murray, Lord Cloncurry, the Hon. Major Southwell, Mr. Ball, Miss Woulfe, and others who died before Mrs. Aikenhead, left her a last proof of their interest in her favourite work; while perhaps in the same page of the record were noted the humble legacy of one pound or of five pounds bequeathed by a former patient, or a poor man who had been frugal for the sake of others still poorer

also born. She was a constant visitor, when in Ireland, to St. Vincent's, and a liberal subscriber. By her will she bequeathed a large sum to the hospital for the purpose of adding a new ward, to be called the "Susanna Ward." The French law forbids the disposal of large sums for foreign purposes, and Madame d'Abbadie's bequest, though derivable from her Irish property, was never received at St. Vincent's.

than himself. And then kind friends brought curious or beautiful things to be raffled or otherwise disposed of for the charity. Now, it was a picture of the Madonna which produced nearly seventy pounds; again, it was a Blenheim spaniel, or a parrot, likewise turned to good account. A gift from Miss O'Brien of Fitzwilliam-square, a silver-gilt plateau, realised nearly £740 for the hospital.

Good reason had Mrs. Aikenhead to say that "St. Vincent's was a continuous miracle of Divine Providence."

In 1850, a new ward for male patients was added to the hospital. It cost about £1,357, gave room for fourteen beds, and was placed under the patronage of St. Laurence O'Toole. With additional room, the labour of necessity increased, and the management of the various departments of that weighty concern required anxious thought and incessant vigilance. The mother-assistant's steady head and firm hand kept all in masterful order; she herself, as Mrs. Aikenhead would say of her, "labouring like a true Sister of Charity (and that is like her own dear self.)" Sometimes there was still another source of anxiety and interest added to those which made the great old mother watch for the daily bulletin from St. Vincent's: as, for instance, when one or another of the congregation had been sent there to be placed under Dr. O'Ferrall's care, and to give the failing constitution one more chance for life. This chance did not always avail; but happy deaths were witnessed in the nun's infirmary at St. Vincent's, and the memory of them lingered long for the consolation of those still left to accomplish on earth the will of the Saviour of the world.

In 1853, died in St. Vincent's hospital, Sister Mary Ambrose O'Brien, a cousin of the good friend and father of the Waterford community, Dr. O'Brien, bishop of that see. This young sister fell into consumption and died the year after her profession. She was not loath to go to God; she regarded an early death as a special favour; and was once heard to say that she thought St. Aloysius was to be envied for his short career. But for all that she laboured cheerfully and indefatigably for the poor as long as strength remained. After her profession she was appointed missioner at Our Lady's Mount, and even while suffering from the disease of which she afterwards died, she was earnest in her entreaties to be allowed to go out to visit the sick. This of course was not permitted; and she was sent to St. Vincent's, as it was evident that the indisposition which she made light of threatened to have serious consequences. At the hospital everything that skill suggested was tried, but sleep could not be procured and the patient gradually sank. Her pious ravings, for she talked incessantly, were often entertaining to the listeners. Sometimes she was instructing children, or preparing an old man for death. Once she greatly amused the sisters by saying in the most old-fashioned way: "I am sure I don't know what the young people of the present

day are made of. Why, from the time I knew I had a heart, I gave it to God!" At one of the visits of the physicians, when Dr. O'Farrell, Mr. Dwyer, and Sir Philip Crampton were present, Sister Mary Ambrose was earnest in assuring them that she had not done something or another, repeating with the greatest solemnity "Never, never; I never did." Dr. O'Farrell, seeing her distressed, asked: "What was it, my dear, that you never did?" Her answer was: "I never did anything but to please God." The doctors looked at one another, and Dr. O'Farrell said to her assuringly: "We are quite certain of it, my child."

About the same time died Sister Mary Elizabeth Roche, a young, well educated, and gifted sister, a relative of Mrs. Aikenhead's old and valued friend, Mr. James Roche. She died two years after her profession. The last sad offices in the grassy peaceful cemetery at Donnybrook is alluded to in the following letter from the Rev. Mother to the Superior of the Waterford convent:—

"I am happy, my dear Magn. Regis, to be able to report favourably of all around me, after our very anxious employs of the last month. Assuredly the circumstances of our dear departed sister, Mary S. Elizabeth's, long illness and departure from this world were in every respect very consoling and edifying; however, as you may suppose, the untiring support and comfort she received to the last moment, could not be without fatiguing, hurrying effects, especially with our dear Mother Mary Lucy and our ever-thoughtful, active, dear Mary Camillus, whose active exertions were constantly required up to yesterday afternoon, when she returned from the last sad functions at St. Mary Magdalen's at nearly three o'clock. The hour, in Dublin, fixed for all Requiem offices is eleven o'clock, to admit of the clergy attending, and there were twenty-two priests at the Office and High Mass. Our constant friend, the Rev. William Mulhall, sang the High Mass, attended by two of our chaplains, the Rev. P.P. of Donnybrook, Rev. Dr. O'Connell, presiding at office and interment, which I am assured was most solemn. You know the little church is beautiful, and the procession to the cemetery was numerous. The day was most charmingly fine —indeed it would seem as if our dear sister went glorifying God on the path which conveyed her earthly remains to their last dwelling. Perhaps no religious person ever sighed more sincerely for the moment of being delivered out of this world of sin than did our beloved young sister; but whilst it was the divine will to leave her on earth, no one could be more industrious or laborious in the service of our holy institute. Her zeal to bring souls to the knowledge and service of God was particularly great, and for [this work] she was well gifted by natural talent and the advantages of an excellent education. In her departure we have sustained a trying loss; but thanks to our heavenly Father, her dear soul was more eminently gifted by divine grace to fit her to appear in His awful presence at the judgment seat. So let us be fervent in prayer to assist in removing every stain which may yet remain to be effaced.—R.I.P. And may each and all of us be faithful in our own great duties of preparing for our awful summons out of this life. Amen! Amen!"

Early in the summer of 1854, St. Vincent's Hospital had a narrow escape of destruction by fire. The circumstances attending the

discovery of the conflagration, and the admirable presence of mind shown by the sisters and servants of the institution, are thus graphically related by Mrs. Aikenhead :—

"*The Sisters of Charity, Our Lady's Mount, Harold's Cross,*
"*Dublin, 25th June,* 1854.

"My dear Mother-Rectress,

"Though truly acceptable, and indeed consoling, to my feelings to receive your dear lines on Friday morning, you little thought that I should so soon appear to you on paper. However, an event has occurred which calls on me to write, lest the public rumour may perhaps convey the news to you; so I am anxious to assure yourself and dear sisters that all of us are safe and well. We think that the event of our dear St. Vincent's Hospital having been, as we feel, miraculously preserved from any sort of accident to its numerous inmates or any loss of property, although a fire broke out in the very heart of the building between twelve and one o'clock this morning, has been spread so widely through our city, and indeed country, that there will be reports of the same in Cork very early by the morning papers.

"First, I must say, adore and praise the Almighty Providence for and with us, for the sweet protection which has preserved all in the midst of the most imminent danger. As yet the cause of the fire is perfectly a mystery to us and to every one, and yet the concourse of gentlemen of the highest intelligence was very great who were on the spot and closely examined the entire circumstances immediately. You well know the locality in which the fire was discovered, and may recollect that there is no flue or fireplace near it. You can recollect that *our* own usual entrance into our community refectory is from a small room through a pretty wide passage, or rather smaller room, which opens by folding-doors from what we call the head-portress's office at one end, and then by folding-doors into said refectory. Both these doors are usually shut by the refectorian after supper, as it is in this smaller room that all affairs of crockery, glass, and metal used in the refectory are kept, and in that spot—the closet or passage—the fire was found to be blazing at the hour I tell you of. One of the night nurses smelt fire and hurried down to the lower or kitchen floor. You know the great staircase is all of stone. On it one lamp of gaslight burns, another in the long stone corridor, as you may remember upwards of 100 feet long; and at this time no candles are at all used in the house, except the taper, which a steady sister who has charge of the gaslights carries in her own hand. It was the reflection of the fire under a door from the kitchen corridor, also of stone, which gave the indication; and Mary Anne Ferris, whom the nurse had called, very wisely (when on opening the door overhead which opens into the hall portress's room, she observed great smoke and smell of fire and indeed the light of it, for one-half of the folding-door was actually on fire) immediately closed that outside door, and proceeding to the great hall, opened the hall-door and called a policeman, whom she sent to the fire office, where we are insured. Then she flew up to Mother-rectress's room, and to the sister ministress's, having sent off the nurse to our Sister Mary Andrew's room, which is in a new small building at the end of the great stone corridor in the vicinity of the men's wards. She, Mary Andrew, started up and made her way direct to the part where the gas metre stands out in the front area, and turned off the gas. So that by the time that two gentlemen who were returning home to Leeson-street and had heard of the fire from the policeman on his way to the fire office,

had arrived with several policemen and had the hall-door opened for them, the entire building was in darkness.

"Almost immediately arrived others of our near neighbourhood, the Chief Baron (Pigot), the Lord Mayor and followers. Our poor female band were drawn up in regular order and actually deluging the apartment on fire; these were the ward maids, all, without a word to be heard, passing from hand to hand buckets and vessels of water, of which there was an abundant supply. In fact by the time that the engines arrived, of which more than one were present, the fire had been extinguished. However, the engines played on the building to cool the heated walls; and we are told that about twenty pounds will cover the loss. Of course this is for the insurance office; and the officers of that establishment are to be on the spot with all our builders, &c. &c., early to-morrow (D.V.)

"I intended to tell you to expedite this information to Margaret, but as she is far from you, dear M. Camillus has written, so with love to each, I am ever, my dear mother, yours affectionately in J. C.

"Sister Mary F. Augustine.

"This not being a post day I must send on to the General P.O."

Mrs. Aikenhead had good reason for saying, as she did say, that the preservation of the hospital was a miracle of merciful protection. One of the folding-doors and three steps of wooden stairs were burned to ashes, the walls of the room in which the fire raged furiously were blackened and blistered, and the ceiling was heated almost to lighting up. If the flames had caught the ceiling, then the chapel immediately overhead would have been in a blaze with all its oak furniture. A few days later Mrs. Aikenhead writes again to Cork, and tells the rectress that none of the sisters in Dublin have suffered from the overpowering alarm which some of them must have felt when the sudden, and of course exaggerated, rumour reached them of the fire at St. Vincent's hospital. As for the sisters who were in the midst of the scene, they all remained perfectly uninjured, nor did the least bad effects from excitement arise either in their case or in that of the poor patients.

This alarming incident gave rise to serious discussions about gas lighting and insurances. Mrs. Aikenhead's opinions on these subjects are clearly stated to one of her correspondents, the rectress of the Cork convent:—

"Your notions concerning the gas lighting are too much like my own, not to call for my concurrence. I do tremble on that score; but when you shall have prayed, and held consultation with wise and experienced persons, even if it be ordained that accidents occur, neither you nor myself need allow self-love to work up any fidgets in our mind. Prepare yourself to understand clearly the precautions necessary to be observed, and try your best to oblige all to observe them accurately. Then again, commit all to the protection of the holy saint chosen as patron to preside over such or such a division of your pious cares. St. Joseph is truly an efficient insurance office; but we are also bound to observe human means when such are afforded to us. I think that the insurance of convents and the establishments

connected with them is *universally* sanctioned, if not *directed* or even *ordered* by the ecclesiastical authorities; and we have now before us a very painful instance to recommend the securing of this precaution.

"Now, my dear mother, I think it well to suggest to you, that it may be well not to confine your consultation to one person on any subject regarding these matters of public information. The advice you quote to me of not minding *insurance* while workmen were employed, was so contrary to *all* I have experienced during many years of experience that I can hardly feel the advice you speak of to be that of a man of business. I should think that the members of the late bishop's family were, of all others in Cork, likely to give practical advice on such matters. They have been very widely concerned in great varieties of public business, and widely experienced in the knowledge of how public establishments are conducted in many places. The establishment you have charge of is not precisely *more* than a washing house; but being supported by the public (although I own not without severe personal labour and great mental labour also) yet we should try to understand what is due to society, as it were at large in all the conduct of our affairs; as however laboriously we are called on to earn for the support of the poor, we must always consider and behave towards the public as our benefactors.

"I am now about to acknowledge, by note and stamped receipt, the sum of twenty-seven pounds eighteen shillings sterling, from the Sun Insurance office to pay for the *repairs*, as losses incurred by the late fire at St. Vincent's Hospital. This statement will prove to you that any amount I may have mentioned to you as of the *losses* was pretty correct. Of course we shall have to add some pounds more, but this sum is the amount of the estimate of builder, &c. &c., sent in and allowed."

This providential deliverance from danger stimulated all Mrs. Aikenhead's grateful feelings. Indeed she never at any time forgot to return thanks to the great Giver of all good. Special thanksgivings were now made in all her houses, and communions were offered for the same intention. Gratifying proofs of sympathy on the part of the friends of the hospital were received on the occasion. Dean Meyler offered at once the transfer to the institution of a legacy of £50 which he had received; another £50 came from a lady who would not allow her name to be mentioned; a bank note for £20 arrived from Paris enclosed in a paper, simply inscribed "For repairs of St. Vincent's hospital;" and small notes to the value of £15 were received from other anonymous well-wishers. Mrs. Aikenhead in communicating this gratifying intelligence winds up with these words: "We feel that our Lord is a grand bank, and in this that we have somehow large funds."

Writing again to the Cork house in August, 1854, she says she is glad to hear that their benefactor, Mrs. MacSweeny, who had lately visited St. Vincent's, was so well pleased by what she saw at the hospital, as indeed, she adds, all strangers as well as home visitors seem to be. "And better still," she continues, "many prove their true satisfaction by contributing their aid to its *support;* and most truly this last is a very weighty affair. But we have up to this pre-

sent time always since our commencement, twenty years ago, enjoyed the sweet testimony of the public approbation." Such, then, is the grateful summing-up of the Rev. Mother's review of the first score years in the history of that apple of her eye, "the dear hospital."

And it was fortunate that she had so consoling a thought to support her through this season of personal suffering and public calamity. Her own infirmities were ever increasing. Sharp attacks of rheumatism now alternated with troublesome bronchial affections, her eyes were beginning to fail, and the spinal irritation was, of course, not lessening.

"My dear," she writes, in October, 1854, "I am myself obliged to remain in bed. It is (D.G.) a charming bright day, but I must do the best to keep the old frame together, and am but too grateful that I am able to write, trying to be prepared for the stopping of the old clock. I have one for use very near its end, and it affords me many a broad hint of what I am myself. But our Lord is Master. May we be ever ready to fulfil His will and obey His summons!"

Mrs. Clifford who, though much better able to move about than the Rev. Mother, was hardly less of an invalid at this time:—

"I grieve to tell you, "writes Mrs. Aikenhead, in 1854, "that our dear Mother Mary Lucy has been in a very suffering state since this day week. She was able to creep in to me last afternoon. We had hoped that some little rally she made within the past month might have continued; but it appears to be the most holy will to leave her in a very suffering state. Good, and with every useful qualification for her important office in our dear congregation, health alone is sadly deficient. But her active, clear mind is ever ready to prompt useful exercise of that only qualification left to her, and with all her miserable state of health she is a treasure. Pray that she may be as great a saint as our Lord designs her to be. Amen."

These illnesses were, properly speaking, domestic trials. But the wars and confusion of the great world also troubled the old Mother, whose mind, ever active in the midst of bodily pain, and rendered more sensitive, perhaps, by the imprisonment to which her ailments condemned her, seemed preternaturally alive to the sorrows that weighed upon her fellow-creatures in seasons of public calamity. The preparations for the Crimean war in 1854, the hurrying out of the military, the terrible news from battle-fields, the anxieties and the lamentations of friends at home, the prevalence of black in the dress of many families, cast a gloom even over poor Ireland, a stranger though she was to the passions and the interests that waged a deadly strife in the far East. Our Lady's Mount was not so far removed from the centre of common life, that the ominous sounds which filled the air could not reach the abode of charity and religion. The rattle of musketry, which gave notice that the troops were at field exercise in the Phœnix Park, and the booming of the artillery practice at the

Pigeon-house fort, reached the Mother's ears as she sat pen in hand in her sanctuary of peace. How much she was affected by these war-like sounds will be seen in the following extract from a letter written by her at this time. She has just said that she feels sure her correspondent will heartily and constantly join in thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the wonderful protection of Providence experienced by the congregation wherever it exists; and then she continues in the following words:—

"My dear mother, let us *all* be fervent in mutual prayer and renewed efforts to prove our gratitude by deeds, according to St. Ignatius's holy teaching. The best proof we can any of us give of this holy spirit of our holy 19th summary will be in proportion as each of us tries effectually to give such repeated and sincere blows and wounds to self-love in its inmost recesses, as will *weaken* this our worst enemy so as to bring about its final destruction. I know that our experienced masters of spiritual life tell us that if one effectual wound be given to this miserable enemy, even at the point of our own death, all will be well. But let us practise well and steadily, for unless we do, how can we take the last aim right? I try to impress this idea on my mind when I am, as it were, tortured by hearing the military practising their awful trade of fire-arms from the Park, whence their shots rebound, as it were, to the wall of this house; and they have been at it from the early hour of seven in the morning. During the year 1848, when Dublin was filled with the army, this sound of fire-arms constantly going on was to me as if we were in the seat of war. We must learn from every trade."

Her sympathy with those who were devoting all the energies of their body and soul to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded in that cruel carnage, and her desire to help the poor souls hurried out of life without a moment's preparation, were not confined to words. She had special prayers offered in her convents for the Sisters of Mercy who had gone out on their heroic mission to the East, and she caused Masses to be celebrated for the relief of the souls of those who perished in the war. To one of the superiors she writes on this subject; and it is not difficult to perceive that while she speaks there is present to her mind an apprehension lest some of her nuns might be tempted to envy the Sisters of Mercy their call to the work of benediction they were engaged in:—

"You will be hearing of the heroic mission about to be undertaken by the Sisters of Mercy. Our paucity of members precludes the possibility of our joining the pious expedition; but we can, and it is a point of duty in each of us to assist the good work by frequent prayer, and constant pure intention in those good works which our poor ability is able to compass. For truly, my dear child, our little *all* of effort in the divine service may be counted as *nothing* if not united to the precious merits of Christ, which alone can give value to our poor nothings—and this can only be effected by true purity of intention. Let us all bear in mind the necessity of destroying that flagrant thief, *vanity*, and of attaining to true self-knowledge. Many of us, I fear, repeat the pious petition of St. Augustine, 'Teach me to know Thee; teach me to know myself,' without taking the pains necessary

to study our poor miserable hearts. I told you, dear, that it was our duty to pray for those who are labouring for the consolation of the suffering wounded in this unfortunate war; but let us be specially fervent in doing all we can to aid the dear souls who are hourly departing from this life. My intention in causing the Novena of Masses to be celebrated was for the relief of the precious souls [of those] who die in this sad carnage and have none to pray for them, that the act of holy charity may bring a blessing on the charges we are engaged in.—A.M.D.G."

But there are sad cases nearer home which the Rev. Mother takes to heart, prays over, and interests others about. Among these is the fate of a young soldier confined in the Richmond gaol under sentence of death, for having killed one of his comrades in a quarrel provoked by a hot discussion on some religious or political question. Thus she gives the facts, writing on the 10th of June, 1854:—

"I am now about to present an object to excite your charitable zeal, and I hope to obtain for him the aid of fervent prayer in this trying time to poor nature. It is a young man of only eighteen years who has received sentence and is to be executed on next Wednesday, 21st instant. He is in the army, and is a fervent, well-instructed Catholic. His fatal crime was effected in a moment of extreme excitement, and the victim of it was, as we understand, a specially dear friend. *This* poor young man was a Protestant, and, as we understand, the altercation arose out of some religious or perhaps political argument. The poor culprit, now as we have every reason to hope preparing piously for his very early death, was brought up to our courts in Dublin to comply with a writ of error which he had been advised to put in, but without avail, for on the second trial his sentence of death was reiterated; and, as I tell you [he] is to be executed on Wenesday next. However, we hope that his removal to Dublin has been truly in the order of a merciful Providence. He was confined in the prison near us here. Our really holy chaplain is also the chaplain of the prison, and a truly zealous, enlightened, and most fervent priest, who we believe has been exercising his holy mission most effectually in this young man's case. Our rev. friend from the first engaged our prayers, and he continues earnestly interested for his dear penitent. He told us that he had rarely met with a layman so thoroughly instructed—actually a theologian—as you may calculate a very ardent Irishman. Let all pray well that he may persevere in his good dispositions. We hope that he may enjoy the resource of a good priest at the last awful moment. The sentence required that he should be remanded to Belfast where his regiment is. They are under orders for the seat of war, but the commander retains the regiment at Belfast to witness the execution of our poor client, Robert Henry O'Neill. Pray for him. I have been urged to write for this charitable aid—and truly I hope it may procure a real happy end. Amen."

Mrs. Aikenhead goes on for the length of six or seven lines to speak of the building of a drying-house at St. Mary's laundry, Donnybrook, and then returns to the condemned soldier: "I feel to hate myself," she says, "for thinking of interrupting the deeply interesting petitions for poor Robert Henry O'Neill."

Some months later we find the Rev. Mother greatly interested in the account given her of the consecration of the Right Rev. Dr. Leahy as

Bishop of Dromore. This distinguished ecclesiastic, a member of the Order of Preachers, and himself a master in sacred eloquence, was consecrated on Rosary Sunday, 1854, the sermon on the occasion being preached by another gifted orator of the same Order, Mrs. Aikenhead's constant and valued friend, the Rev. Dr. Russell. The report of the sermon having been sent to the Rev. Mother by the rectress of the Cork convent, thanks are returned in the following terms:—

"I am anxious to assure you of your note by Tuesday's post having brought to me very sincere pleasure, but above all I thank you for the real and most gratifying treat of the admirable sermon preached at the consecration on Rosary Sunday. Truly it was 'a feast of reason,' and did produce 'a flow of soul,' or rather caused a most enjoyable elevation of soul. Dear Mary Camillus read it for me in the evening; for, my dear, I cannot attempt to read anything of newspaper print, only just try to keep the poor eyes as well as we can, for they are very weak. I am still obliged to remain in bed; but am (D.G.) this day and during the latter part of yesterday more free from acute pain than has been the case since I enjoyed putting up the little books of devotion to the holy angels for you. I never had so acute and lengthened an attack of rheumatism before, and we must be prepared for what may be the Divine appointment as the winter comes on. . . . .

"I was very glad to learn that our archbishop did you the honour of celebrating at your beautiful altar, and that you and our beloved sisters enjoyed the holy consolation and assistance of so many sacred celebrations. May our heavenly Father grant each and all the grace to produce due fruit from all His great mercies. Amen.

"Most truly do I feel for our dear sisters of the North Presentation in the great loss that pious community must sustain in the removal of Bishop Leahy. Indeed I feel that his lordship's removal will be a serious loss in the city. May our Lord supply for it, and also grant that the diocese to which, in His wisdom, He calls the good and holy prelate may be proportionately benefited. Amen! I must not omit inquiring of you whether that truly great and instructive sermon will be printed in form of a pamphlet? If so I beg of you to procure some copies for us here. To me the sermon appeared to be calculated to be eminently useful, and on the point of giving *necessary* instruction on so vitally important a subject as the Church of God in this poor country, it seems most desirable to promulgate what is so admirably clearly taught. So I hope it will be published and very extensively disseminated."

From the above letter it is only too plain that the aged Mother's sight is failing. The handwriting also about this time shows that the rheumatic affection had touched the indefatigable fingers. She begins now to speak of "the poor lame pen," and the difficulty she finds in getting through a letter. And thus wear on the next three years: the Rev. Mother still directing and governing; still writing, though not without difficulty; still suffering. An affection of the heart was now added to her ailments, and symptoms of a fatal dropsy were becoming manifest. She completed her seventieth year in 1857; and in the course of the next year she was to be released from the sufferings by which it had pleased the Father of all to prepare his chosen

servant and the instrument of so much good, for the everlasting reward of those who have borne the burden and heat of the day and persevered unto the end. But she was not left without joys. She had the supreme delight of knowing that each one of her foundations was established on a secure basis, was able to bear the trials which inevitably fall to the lot of every human institution, and had obtained many an assurance of God's best blessing. Over each house ruled a superior—one after her own heart, deeply imbued with the spirit of the institute, and her prayer now to Almighty God was that these friends should be left to her while still she had to bear the burden of responsibility, and that they should survive to carry on the work according to the design so deeply thought out, so fervently prayed over, and put into execution under such high and solemn sanctions. Her prayer was heard; they were all still with her to the end. Gratitude overflowed her heart when she thought of this crowning mercy, and when she remembered all that the generous people had done to enable her to set going and to support those various works of zeal and charity.

And there was another gladness brightening the last years of her life: a gladness calculated to rekindle in the great old Mother's heart all the glow of early enthusiasm, and to waken—if indeed it had ever slumbered—all her interest in the story of the ancient and the faithful land. A property which in former days belonged to a monastic order was about to be restored to religious uses; and on the soil once owned and tilled by Eremites of St. Augustine, and close to the venerable ruins of their abbey, a foundation of Sisters of Charity was soon to be made. The circumstances which led to this transfer of an estate to Mrs. Aikenhead, and the history of Benada Abbey, cannot be told in a very few words. Let us link the present with the past, and tell the story as we have learned it, and as it was, to some extent at least, known to the great old Mother.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### BENADA ABBEY.

FATHER CHARLES of the Eremites of St. Augustine, founded, in the year of our Lord, 1423, a convent of his Order at a place called Benada in the territory of Leyney. This district, comprising a part of the present county of Sligo, was ruled by the O'Haras its feudatory lords. In all probability this Father-founder was of the chieftain's race: for Charles, or Cormac, was a family name of the O'Haras, and tradition

has always maintained that the monastery of Benada, like other religious houses in the same part of the country, owed its origin to the piety of the lords of the soil. By favour of these chieftains, at any rate, the convent of Corpus Christi, as it was called, was destined to become a flourishing establishment; and a majestic pile, constructed of hewn stone quarried in the neighbouring mountains, and having a massive tower springing from a single arch, arose on the banks of the Moy.

The situation was a choice one for a monastic retreat. The fertile clearance on which the edifice stood was sheltered by a long stretch of the Ox mountains, which at a further distance rose up in abrupt shoulders and fantastic knobs.[1] Around was the primeval forest, clothing in those days the plains and beautifying the hills of Connaught. Game abounded on the heathy acclivities and in the woodland brakes, the red deer roamed at large in the denser forest, and goats and mountain cattle browsed on the green spaces between the boulders strewn upon the heights. Close by the walls flowed the Moy, a beautiful stream, on whose banks the Druids once had raised their altars and set up their idols; whose name was celebrated in bardic legends; and whose plentiful waters were blessed by Patrick, and Brigid, and Columbkill, and Canice: and by the sons of Drogen whom Patrick baptised when he crossed the Moy and entered Tirawley.[2]

The river now fertilised the Eremites' fields, turned their mill, and afforded an unfailing supply of fish for fasting days. Near enough to be a protection against marauders, stood a castle of the O'Haras; and in close proximity nestled a population dwelling in huts made of the timber and wattles supplied by the neighbouring woods. For these friars Eremites were not such solitaries but that they evangelised their neighbours in days of peace, succoured them in seasons of calamity, and sheltered them in dangerous times. Nor were they such recluses that they did not quit the precincts of the abbey lands. Covering their white habit with a black hood and cowl, they went abroad according as the business of their community or the service of their neighbours might require.

A place of beauty, rest, and security seemed this monastery by the

[1] Benada, in Irish Beann Fhooda; means long mountain. "*Beann* (ban), genitive and plural *beanna* (banna) signifies a horn, a gable, a peak, or pointed hill; but is often applied to any steep hill: cognate with Latin *pinna*." Joyce's "Irish Names of Places."

The same authority says that the present English name of the Ox mountains is a mistake. "The Irish name, in all our Annals, is *Sliabh-ghamh* (which properly means stormy mountain); but the natives, believing it to be *Sliabh-dhamh*, i.e. the mountain of the oxen, have perpetuated the present incorrect name."

[2] See an account of the river Moy in the Ordnance Survey MSS., Royal Irish Academy. According to the old story, Partholon, when he arrived in Ireland 300 years after the flood, found only nine rivers in the whole kingdom, and fish in the river Moy only.

river side: a fitting place to end one's days in after the watch and war of the chieftain's unrestful reign. So thought O'Hara Duv Donagh, who, in 1439, resigned his lordship in favour of his brother Cormac (thereupon nominated the O'Hara) and entered among the friars in the monastery of Beann Fhooda. Later on, in more troublous days, others of that princely race also died within the abbey walls: but bloodily as on the battle-field; for, in 1488, "John Oge O'Hara and his son were treacherously slain on a Sunday in the Monastery of Benada by their own near kinsmen Rory and Hugh." Family feuds with their attendant crimes, and the encounters of belligerent clans, sank into insignificance when the Elizabethan war broke out and laid the island waste from sea to sea. Sir Richard Bingham, President of Connaught, disregarding the instructions he had received from the Lord Deputy, Sir John Perrott, to observe moderation and justice in dealing with the inhabitants of the country, whether native Irish, or the English of Connaught, soon forced into the hostile camp even those who might have been conciliated. The Burkes of Mayo broke out into rebellion, engaged an auxiliary force of Highland Scots, and mustering their forces in Sligo about the Ox mountains, prepared to rescue Connaught from the Queen's dominion. Bingham, by a feigned retreat, misled the insurgents, and then gathering his forces at Benada marched from the already dismantled monastery "in the beginning of a very dark night in harvest;" and, in the absence of the Burkes, surprised the Scots in their encampment at Ardnaree. Roused from slumber by the cry of their sentinels, the Scots made what defence they could. But "they were precipitately routed towards the river which was in front of them, namely, the agreeable, murmuring Moy; men were prostrated while they were making for the river, and when they arrived at it they did not stop there, but immediately plunged into its depth, for they preferred being drowned, rather than slain by the governor's people" Nearly 2,000 of the Scots lost their lives in that massacre, and the greater number of those who escaped from the encampment on the Moy were either hanged, or killed by the sword, in every country through which they passed in their retreat before they had crossed the Erne.[1]

From that time forth war raged throughout north Connaught, until the Irish of that province, unable to hold out any longer, submitted to James I., whose "settlements" and "plantations" continued the havoc, and completed the desolation of the West. Roger Jones of the ancient family of the Joneses of Ruthyn in Wales, a gentleman whose attachment to the English interest could be relied on, was appointed constable of Sligo in 1606. Soon after, he was made a privy councillor; and in 1612 he received the honour of knighthood. Sir Roger

[1] See "Annals of the Four Masters," A.D. 1586, Connellan's translation.

was zealous in the propagation of the Protestant religion, and there is still in existence a warrant signed by his hand ordering the expulsion of the Jesuits from the kingdom. Large grants of confiscated property in Wexford and Sligo were conferred on him; and among his possessions in the last-named county was the Abbey of Benada, with its dependencies. He had two daughters, for whom he provided by settling on them estates in Wexford and other places, while he retained the patrimony of the Eremites for himself. In course of time the heiresses found suitable husbands; and Sir Roger, having become a widower, formed a second alliance and brought up a younger family at the abbey. Very early in their history this family became connected by marriage with the chief of the O'Haras, who, with a readiness unworthy of his ancestry, saved his property by conforming to the state religion.[1]

How it was that the Joneses preserved their estate on the banks of the Moy, in the general overturn effected by Strafford, and Coote, and Cromwell, and William of Orange, we cannot say. All we know is, that when war and revolution had done their work, and the 18th century laden with its own dark clouds had dawned, the Joneses of Benada were still owners of the ruins and proprietors of the abbey lands. But how changed the scene! The monastery tower, grown more rock-like as the perilous years rolled on, stood out solitary and stark against the stony heights—its sheltering woods destroyed. From its summit the master of Benada might look in vain even to the horizon for a remnant of the luxuriant woods. Here a wild moor, and there a wet bog, met the eye; and the Moy, no longer fringed with pendant boughs and flecked with leafy shadows, rolled its waters bare to the sky, and sped across the scene of desolation to lose itself in the western main.

The English settlers of recent date, and the Protestantised families of older standing or of native origin, made common cause and shared the good things of this world between them; while the representatives of those families which had remained faithful to their religion lived in obscurity, keeping up antique customs, and maintaining a precarious intercourse with relatives settled on the Continent.[2] The peasants and these ruined gentry knew where the priest was to be found on Sunday mornings—now in a distant part of the bog, and again high up on "Mass hill." In very bad times the hiding-place of the bishop was known to but few even of his own flock.

[1] For an account of the O'Haras, ancient and modern, see Archdeacon O'Rorke's interesting work, the "History of the Parishes of Ballysadare and Kilvarnet."

[2] One of these faithful families, the Cookes of Sligo (originally of Carlow), having lost their leaseholds and homesteads "on account of their sympathy some years before with the cause of the 'Pretender' and of the old faith, . . . got leases from the Joneses of Benada Abbey." This fact, so highly creditable to the Joneses, is recorded in Mr. O'Hart's "Irish Pedigrees," second series, p. 322.

When the 18th century passed its meridian the same change occurred in this district as had taken place in other parts of the country. The penal laws fell into abeyance, the persecution of individuals ceased to a great extent, the priests remained unmolested, the friars went freely abroad, and the Catholics might assemble when and where they liked for Mass. Provided that they all kept quiet and paid tithes to the clergy of the Establishment, it was no concern of the authorities in Church or State to molest them any further. The Jones family, like most of their compeers, had little sympathy with the native population, and regarded them as sadly benighted creatures whose religion consisted in hearing the priest's Mass, replenishing the friar's wallet, and going on pilgrimage to St. Attracta's holy well.[1]

Once, however, on a memorable occasion the priest of the parish and the lord of the manor came into collison. The Roger Jones of that day having heard that the priest threatened to denounce from the altar one of his flock, a resident on the lands of Benada, whose conduct had been the cause of grievous scandal among the simple population of the district, sent a message to Father —— intimating that he would horsewhip him should he dare to carry his threat into execution. And to leave no doubt on the priest's mind, Mr. Jones made his appearance in the chapel on the following Sunday, thus defying him by his presence in the midst of the Catholic congregation. The priest, no way deterred from the performance of what he considered his bounden duty, proceeded to take measures for the repression of disorders among his flock, and mentioned the name of the person whose conduct deserved this public censure. No sooner was the word pronounced when Mr. Jones sprang from his place, leaped over the altar rails, and lifted his hand to commit the outrage he had meditated. The people seeing this cried out with one voice—*The curse of St. Attracta be upon you!* and immediately the outstretched arm fell powerless, struck by a fatal paralysis.

[1] Of all the saints connected with this part of the country Attracta is the most popular, and with good reason; for her great characteristics were boundless charity, and a readiness to go any lengths to help the poor and the oppressed. Her memory is preserved in many a picturesque legend. It is said that she would not build her nunnery except in a place where seven roads met, so that she might extend hospitality to all strangers. This nunnery, doubtless a cluster of huts enclosed within a rampart or rath, was situated near Lough Gara, and in the principality of Leyney, of which she was a native. On one occasion, says the legend, her countrymen being pursued by a powerful enemy the saint came to their rescue and opened a dry passage for them through the lake. When the King of Connaught imposed an oppressive tax on the people of Leyney, Attracta went herself to remonstrate with the monarch and obtain their release from his extortionate demands. The tyrant refused her petition; but heaven heard her prayer, and deer came out of the forest carrying the timber which had been demanded as a tribute from the men of Leyney. It is popularly believed that St. Attracta was a cotemporary of St. Patrick, but according to Dr. Lanigan she did not live until some time, perhaps late, in the sixth century. The name is sometimes spelled Athrachta; and in foreign martyrologies appears as Tarachta or Tarahata.

In the midst of the dread sensation caused by this incident, Mr. Jones returned to the Abbey. Entering into himself he recognised the hand of God in this visitation, and after some time sent for the priest, asked his forgiveness, and told him he had resolved to become a Catholic. In due course the priest received him into the Church, and a strong friendship sprang up between the zealous pastor and the owner of Benada. Long before this event occurred Mr. Jones had married a Catholic lady, Miss Kelly of Cargins (long remembered in the country as "the good Eleanor Kelly;") but the children of the marriage had been brought up in the religion of their father. They were now old enough to choose for themselves. None of them, however, entered the Catholic Church except the eldest son, Daniel, who having gone to live in Dublin was not much heard of in the county of Sligo. It was afterwards understood in the family that he became a priest, and only preserved his property by keeping this fact in the background. When dying he left his possessions to his nephew Daniel, who being a mere boy when his father died, was reared a Catholic by his mother, formerly Miss Keon, of Keonsbrook.

This Daniel when he became owner of Benada took much pains to improve the family residence; a convenient and pretty though unpretending mansion was erected on the site of the former dwelling; and the demesne, laid out with care, was beautifully planted with forest trees and ornamental shrubs. Gradually the old beauty returned; the waters received the tender reflections of leafy greenery; around the tower once more the ash and beech, the larch and pine struck root; colonies of birds came from afar to settle in the new plantations and kept up a ceaseless song to the accompaniment of "the murmuring Moy;" and early in the present century it was remarked in Mason's "Parochial Survey," that Mr. Jones could "already boast of an inheritance which no gentleman within twenty miles of him could exhibit, viz., so many grown trees as constitute a rookery."

Here, in the midst of the flourishing plantations and under the shadow of the hoary tower grew up the first generation of Catholic Joneses. The father of the flock loved books, and found time to indulge a taste for serious study. The mother, a member of the ancient Catholic family of the MacDonnells, preserved the spirit of olden days in a memory well stored with history and legend. Another Daniel, their eldest son, was born in 1816, on the night between the 1st and the 2nd of February. He himself in after years used to wish to believe that his birthday was the 2nd, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin; but the country people maintained that the young master first saw the light on the 1st, the feast of St. Brigid and the fair day of Carrignagat. Moreover, the humble neighbours who happened to be about the place on that night, watching no doubt in sympathy with the family of the Abbey, averred that two white birds

such as they never saw in that part of the country, alighted on the roof of the dwelling and remained there all night, on guard as it were.

Daniel grew into a fair child, delicate and naturally refined, gifted with talent and the best qualities of the heart, and as devout as he was loving. His parents full of faith, and truly good as they were, could not help wondering where he made out the devotions he practised; for at that time, in the remote parts of the country especially, spiritual helps unless of the ordinary and obligatory kind did not lie at one's door. He had himself enrolled in the association of the Sacred Heart, and invested with the scapulars; prepared himself for his first communion; and in short looked after his own spiritual affairs. As he grew up he became a proficient in music, and a graceful and fearless rider; but perhaps his greatest delight was in poring over a book, or in listening to the conversation of the learned. One day when his father and two fine old priests of the Salamanca school were debating some question of special interest, the discussion came to a stand-still for want of a date. To the astonishment of the gentlemen, young Daniel emerging from a corner supplied the required date from his store of youthful erudition.

These "Children of the Abbey"—Daniel Jones and his brothers and sisters—formed an interesting group, innocent and happy, in the secluded country seat. The simple pleasures of a rural life sufficed for their amusement out of doors; while their serious pursuits were of a refined order, such as prevail in a household where education is valued, where books abound, and where the things of God are not forgotten. No doubt the associations connected with the place had also their effect. The children's delight was to scramble on their hands and knees up the broken stair of the abbey tower, passing by the discoloured wall, stained, as tradition said, with the blood of a murdered lord, and to issue out on the crumbling parapet whence, three or four hundred years ago, white-robed Eremites surveyed the primeval forest, and followed with their meditative eyes the winding of the "fishful river" which bards had sung and saints had blessed.[1] As they grew to manhood and womanhood these children heard the woods and the river, the winds and their own hearts, and the voice of God Himself, telling them that a life devoted to religion was the greatest happiness that could anywhere be found, that to befriend the poor and to instruct others unto justice was the noblest career that anyone could ambition. These thoughts, and the desire of devoting themselves in some way or another to so blessed a service, were seldom long absent from their minds, and they were accustomed to talk over their

[1] In Grose's "Antiquities of Ireland" there are two fine views of Benada Abbey. One of these, taken from the opposite side of the river, gives a general view of the ruins; the other is a near view, giving the interior walls, and the tower with its supporting arch.

ideas and their hopes, and to carry on together their pious castle building.

At sixteen years of age, Daniel was sent to Priorpark College, in England. No pains were to be spared on his education, for a useful and honourable career lay before him. Catholic Emancipation had lately been won, and as a Catholic gentleman and proprietor Jones of Benada might now take a position in the country which had hitherto been unattainable by a professor of the ancient creed. When leaving home his father said to him: "Let no man lay a finger on you (the ferula was then in pretty general use in schools), and if you do not like anything, come away." Daniel distinguished himself greatly, and all went on well until just as he was about to enter the class of philosophy an occurrence took place among the philosophers which caused them to be put back a year. To one young man's conduct this sentence was solely attributable, and Daniel Jones, not thinking it fair to condemn the many for the fault of the one, acted on his father's suggestion and returned home. He was so much regretted at the college that one of the professors, writing to Mr. Jones, said that his son's departure was greatly to be lamented for this, if for no other reason—that the example given to the other students by such a young man as Daniel was invaluable. Afterwards he entered Trinity College, and on his first examination was put in for honours. It was believed he would make a great figure in the world, obtain wealth and distinction, and restore the family fortunes which had somewhat suffered from the mismanagement or perhaps the extravagance of former proprietors.

On his return to Benada, Daniel found his father high-sheriff of the county of Sligo, an office which had not been filled by a gentleman of his religion since the penal days. He himself became very popular; the Catholic multitude were proud of "the young master," and he was regarded as the hope of the liberal party in the country: for O'Connell had early taken notice of him, and had made him when only a boy of twelve years of age a member of the Catholic Association. He was a fine-looking young man at this time, having, in appearance at least, outgrown the delicacy of his earlier years; his bearing was remarkably gentlemanlike; and with a very high spirit he combined great sweetness of character. With the Catholic and Protestant gentry of the neighbourhood, among whom his family connections were extensive, he was a great favourite. Some of his relatives were people of literary taste; as for instance, his cousins the Keons of Keonsbrook, one of whom, while Governor of Jamaica, wrote "Dion and the Sybils;" and the family of the Croftons, who were cousins likewise.

Young Jones and his elder sister spent much of their time at Longford, the residence of Sir Malby Crofton, a handsome place near the sea and on the borders of Sligo. This family were intimate with the Wordsworths, the Quillinans, Sara Coleridge, and other distinguished

members of the literary world; and the intellectual atmosphere in which they lived was not without a special charm for the young people of Benada Abbey. Sir Malby's sister, it will be remembered, was the original of Lady Morgan's Glorvina in the "Wild Irish Girl;" and it may be mentioned here that the chaplain of the Prince of Coolavin, another character in the romance, was also drawn from life in the same neighbourhood: Dr. Flynn, the Dean of Sligo (afterwards Bishop of Achonry), having sat (albeit without his consent) for the learned and devoted Father John.

When he came of age Mr. Daniel Jones was proposed as a representative for the county Sligo in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Colonel Percival, the nominee of the Conservative party, was his opponent, and the contest was a sharp one. During the election, party spirit ran so high that the military were called out and the young candidate's life had a narrow escape from the British musket. He and his father were at dinner with some friends in the town, when the shouting and commotion outside became so violent that he sprang from the table and rushed to the hall-door to endeavour to quiet the people. As he did so the lady of the house appeared in the hall to prevent his going out; he insisted; she placed her arm across the doorway, and on the instant a shot was heard and a man fell dead on the steps beside them! An investigation was subsequently held in reference to the doings of that day, the military intervention, the manslaughter, and the rest. The major of the regiment, in the heat of the discussion, accused Mr. Jones of sacrificing his duty as high-sheriff in favour of his son's return. The old man was ill at the time and unable to take his own part, and grievous was the son's anxiety to remove the odious imputation.

In those days duelling was lightly thought of, and evil counsel was at hand to fan the flame of indignation. The young man thought there was nothing for it but to send a challenge to the major for the next morning. A messenger, running in breathless haste, arrived at Benada with this sad intelligence for mother and sister. Their horror of the deed and their dread of the consequences cannot be expressed. They spent nearly the entire night in prayer. The Lord who saw their tears and their faith heard their supplications, and in the morning the good news was brought to the house that the major who had been informed that nothing but the fullest apology would satisfy the gentleman whose father had been so grossly insulted, sat down at once and in the presence of the friend who was prepared to act as Mr. Jones's second, wrote a note unsaying all that in the heat of passion he had alleged.

The young candidate lost his election through treachery it is believed; but the people applauded the spirit and energy with which he had supported the liberal interest. He next turned his attention to

the study of law, with a view of being called to the bar. The justiceship of the peace was conferred on him, and after a time he was appointed a deputy-lieutenant. But with all his advantages of position, talents, and character, and notwithstanding his having friends in high places ready to promote his advancement in whatever career he should adopt, he found himself unable to settle to anything. "Vanity of vanities!" rang in his ears; no worldly object seemed worth the pursuit, or capable of filling his heart. Finally, being then only twenty-three years of age, he went to Louvain, seriously thought of the Church, remained for about two years studying earnestly various branches of knowledge, and then turned his steps homewards having made up his mind to enter the Society of Jesus.

Meanwhile, Daniel Jones had not been forgotten in his native country. A vacancy having again occurred in the representation of Sligo, he was asked to allow himself to be put in nomination. This time he would have been returned without expense to himself, and with hardly any opposition. The Government, O'Connell, the people now grown powerful, were all anxious for his return to serve in Parliament. This was certainly a temptation, and his best friends were of opinion that it was his duty to allow himself to be put in nomination, and thus get a footing for the liberal interest in his county. His father wished him to take the position now offered to him; his uncle urged him strongly not to hold back; his sister alone who had always been in his confidence thought differently. When she heard that he was wavering in his resolve, she set out from England where she had been staying, and reached Dublin in time to join her brother at the house of their uncle in that city, a day or two before his decision should finally be announced. He listened to what she had to say, but made no promise.

As the family sat at dinner one evening a knock was heard at the door, and presently the servant came to tell Mr. Jones that a deputy from the liberal party—Mr. Roe, the secretary of the Catholic Association—awaited his final answer. Laying down his napkin, he rose from his seat saying, "What shall I do?" "Say you will do it, of course, my dear fellow," cried his uncle. "You and I will go down by the mail to-night and commence operations to-morrow." "Surely," chimed in his aunt, "you could not think of anything else!" "What do *you* say, Mary?" asked Daniel, looking across the table to where his sister sat. She bent down her head and burst into tears; and he, going over, kissed her, and said: "You need not be afraid; I will not do it."

His friends were much displeased by his decision. He took lodgings for himself and his sister; after a while went to Clongowes to see the Provincial of the Jesuits; made his arrangements; and in course of time entered the noviceship of the society. In after years he used

to say of this sister: "Is it any wonder I should love her? She was my guardian angel." From the time he entered the Society of Jesus up to his happy death no doubt or wavering thought ever crossed his mind. He had found what *was* worth the trouble of seeking, and what could fill his heart.

About the same time that Daniel Jones joined the Society of Jesus, his sister carried out likewise the desire of her own heart, offered herself as a candidate to Mrs. Aikenhead, and entered the noviceship of the Sisters of Charity. These were but the beginning of many changes. Old Mr. Jones, who had been ailing for some time, became a confirmed invalid. His son's choice of religious life had been a disappointment to him; but he soon became reconciled to the prospect of seeing him a member of the illustrious Society of Jesus; and in the end was wont to express his desire that all his children might be consecrated to God, and to wish that a portion of the property which had once been dedicated to religious purposes might again be appropriated to the same service. With these thoughts floating like dreams through his mind, and forming the subject of conversations with his devoted wife, Mr. Jones neared the end. He died in the year 1845. A second daughter in course of time entered the same congregation as her sister; and then a third became a Sister of Mercy; one young brother died, and was buried in the abbey; and another, following the example of Daniel, bade adieu to the world, and joined the Society which the latter had entered.

There now remained the mother of all these servants of God—a childless widow in the old house. The parting from her children as one after another they declared their conviction that God had called them to serve Him in the religious state, and their desire to follow His voice, was a trial of the severest kind to her motherly heart. Still, though the pang was great, she would not, even if she could, detain them. Her desire, as sincere as theirs, was to give all to God; and now that her husband was no more, her thoughts were occupied on the subject which had filled his mind on his death-bed, and which their children were anxious to see accomplished. This was, as already said, the dedication to religious uses of a part of the family property.

Father Jones had resolved that the congregation of the Sisters of Charity should become the owners of the ancestral seat at Benada Abbey, and of about 900 acres of the property which he had inherited; but a considerable time elapsed before all matters could be so arranged as to allow of the legal conveyance being made over to Mrs. Aikenhead. Rent charges had to be paid off and a new title obtained under the Encumbered Estates Court. In the ordinary course of things the proposed religious foundation could not be made until after Mrs. Jones's death; but this good lady, anxious to forward in every possible way the wishes of her late husband and of her dearly loved son, relin-

quished all her claims on the property; and instead of retaining her handsome dower, reserved the very smallest possible annuity for her own support. One only desire she had on earth, and this was that the foundation having been made, she might live for the rest of her days under the same roof with the nuns. Her wish was gratified. It was arranged that a part of the house with a separate entrance should be reserved for her; and thus, although the Constitutions do not allow of seculars residing with the nuns, Mrs. Jones's desire of living under the same roof with them was gratified.

Meanwhile, the great old Mother whose spiritual daughters were to become the owners of an estate which once had been bestowed on the sons of her own illustrious patron, St. Augustine, was sensibly failing, and could not in the ordinary course of nature survive for many months longer. Although the actual transfer of the property could not immediately be effected, Father Jones was anxious that she should connect her name with Benada, at least by appending her signature to the "vow" which was to form the act of acceptance on the part of the congregation, and to the document in which certain conditions were specified and agreed to. The founder of the house of Our Lady of Benada was gratified by obtaining the Rev. Mother's signature, and was happy in believing that she would by her prayers procure a blessing for the work which it was for her successor to accomplish. It cost her a great effort to use for the last time "the poor lame pen" in signing her name to the deeds by which Benada was connected with her other labours for God and the poor. The vow is as follows:—

"A. M. D. G.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

"Almighty and everlasting God, I, Mary Aikenhead, the unworthy instrument of the Divine Majesty in the Foundation of the Irish Congregation of the Religious Sisters of Charity, being moved by the desire of still further extending it to Thy greater glory by the establishment of a new convent at Benada, do beseech of Thee by the precious Blood and Passion of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to place the projected foundation under the special protection and patronage of His Blessed Mother, the Immaculate Virgin Mary. And I, as Superior of the Congregation, do promise in presence of the most sacred Virgin Mary, and of Thy whole heavenly court, that as far as in me lies, each Sister of Charity residing in that convent shall offer daily the prayer "Memorare" before the statue of the Immaculate Conception, honoured there at present under the title of "Our Lady of Benada," in thanksgiving for Our Lady's protection. From Thine immense goodness and clemency, therefore, and by the precious

Blood and Passion of Our Lord Christ, Thy Son, I suppliantly beseech Thee to accept this offering in the odour of sweetness, and to grant the requested favour to the honour of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and to the greater glory of Thy holy name.

"Done at Our Lady's Mount, this Fourth day of April, being the Feast of Easter, in the year of Our Lord, Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-eight.

"MARY AIKENHEAD."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### DEATH OF MRS. AIKENHEAD.

THE acceptance of the grant of Benada Abbey was the last public or official act of the great old Mother. The occasion was a striking and typical one, worthily closing a career which had run its course through an eventful period in the history of the Irish people. Mary Aikenhead, now in the 71st year of her age, was born, as we already know, at a time when the Catholics still lay prostrate under the Penal regime. The Ireland which her infantine eyes looked out on was not the Green Island of the poet or the prophet. No one had as yet been imaginative or hopeful enough to give the land of sorrow such a name.[1] And yet she lived to see the whole surface of the country changed, the buried-alive brought forth, the Catholic nation resurgent from sea to sea. The vitality which not all the force of principalities and powers could destroy, and the faith which survived when heaven itself seemed deaf to the cry for deliverance, were now accomplishing an unimagined work —founding a new Erin, and building up a structure no less wondrous and beautiful than that of which the ruins strewed the land.

Mary Aikenhead had her appointed share in the work. From first to last all her desires were centred and all her energies employed in the interests of religion in her native land; in the service of the poor and sick; the succour of the young and helpless. Heaven had wonderfully blessed her efforts, and when old age came her hands were full of good works. Moreover, she had assurance that the harvest of her

[1] Mrs. Jameson, in the introduction to "Sacred and Legendary Art," observes that "GREEN, the emerald, is the colour of spring; of hope, particularly hope in immortality; and of victory, as the colour of the palm and the laurel." The two angels "with two flaming swords, truncated and deprived of their points," whom Dante saw descending into Purgatory "from Mary's bosom, as guardians of that valley," wore garments "green as the little leaflets just now born," which, beaten and blown abroad by their verdant pinions, they trailed behind. See Longfellow's translation of the "Purgatorio."

labour should increase, for around her were gathered those who were pledged to toil until death in the same field, and to transmit the spirit of her institute to future generations. All that was left for her now to do was to glorify God unto the end by her patience in suffering, and to give up her soul in lively faith and perfect trust to the Saviour of the world.

Her sufferings were indeed severe and continuous. Early in the year 1858, symptoms of dropsy became manifest. For a time the evil was warded off, but eventually the disease set in. There was every appearance that mortification was commencing, and Dr. O'Ferrall applied severe remedies as a last resource. After some weeks the dropsy subsided, but paralysis then ensued. The head fell forward to so painful a degree that when she had to be fed it was necessary for a sister to stand behind her to hold it back. However, the maladies, though all of a painful nature, were a small portion of her sufferings. She had had interior trials in the course of her life, such as the saints have had, and it was the Divine will that she should suffer in the same way during her last illness. Generally she slept in the day-time, but the whole night was passed in prayer—in one incessant cry for mercy. Again and again she would recite the verse of the psalm: "For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him there is plentiful redemption;" or recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, slightly varying the titles of our Lady, and dwelling in her peculiarly reverent and impressive way on the invocations: *Honourable* Vessel, *Noble* Vessel of Election, and so on. Sometimes she would go through the Rosary, substituting the "Hail, holy Queen, *Mother of Mercy*," for the Hail Mary. Her terror about receiving the Holy Communion was most distressing, yet in obedience she communicated regularly several times in the week.

Though her confessor, a holy man, would have given worlds to be able to comfort her, he seemed entirely unable to understand her state of trial, and was, therefore, incompetent to support her under it. Once, after the visit of the confessor, she said as if thinking aloud: "No comfort, no support." The infirmarian reminded her of St. Francis Xavier on the desert isle of Sanciano without one kindred spirit to commune with. She replied: "True, child, true;" and never again mentioned the subject. Yet her distress of mind never seemed in the least to proceed from want of confidence in the Divine mercy; it appeared rather to be an excess of awe, an intense reverence for the majesty of God, resulting from a quickening of the divine virtue of faith which not unfrequently occurs as the soul nears the spiritual world. It seemed an answer to her incessant prayer through life: "Lord increase my faith!" Towards the end of March, 1858, it was judged advisable to administer the last sacraments. At the same time she performed her devotions for gaining the indulgences of the

jubilee: the conditions imposed on her being the same that had been prescribed for the Pére de Ravignan the previous year when he too was dying.

Among the many virtues she practised in her last days humility was conspicuous. She would sometimes bend forward, bowing her head as low as possible, and say with a reverence most affecting to those around her: "Oh! that *I* should have *presumed* to offend the majesty of the great God!" Once when the mind was wandering a little, she fancied that her bed was not so good as that of the other sisters, and asked in the gentlest manner if she might have one *only* like theirs; but then suddenly recollecting herself, she was confounded to think that *she* should have asked to be treated like the rest of the community. Sometimes again she would look anxiously round the room, saying: "No want; no practice of poverty;" and when reminded that under her circumstances any sister would receive the same care and attention, she would shake her head doubtingly, and again express her desire for some practice of poverty. The period of her last trial was mercifully shortened. Some time before her death her usual serenity of mind returned, and "God reserving all His sweets for the last," filled her soul with happiness. Her long-tried friend, Dr. Russell of the Order of Preachers, having come to Dublin about this time, paid her many a kind visit, and, understanding her state of trial, afforded her greatest comfort and support. Another kind and frequent visitor was Archbishop (afterwards Cardinal) Cullen. Once when Mrs. Hickson thanked the archbishop for his attention to the Rev. Mother, his Grace replied: "It is due to her. Who ever did more for religion?" On the 22nd of July, the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, she received Holy Viaticum at noon; and about three o'clock on the same day, as her children knelt around her, she breathed her last.

The Requiem Mass and Office took place at St. Mary's, Donnybrook, and was numerously attended by the clergy and laity. A large body of artisans who knew what a friend the Rev. Mother had been to the working classes, attended the funeral and begged to be allowed to carry the coffin to the grave. Their request was complied with, and the mortal remains of Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead were laid under the green sod in the presence of the ministers of holy Church; her children, the Irish Sisters of Charity; and the representatives of the grateful people whom she had loved and laboured for.

Her friend and law-agent, Mr. Parker, erected over the spot where her remains repose a noble Irish cross, hewn out of native granite, with an inscription on the pediment. Messrs. Brown and Nolan, printers and stationers to the congregation, and benefactors to its institutions, put up a memorial window to her over the altar of the Sacred Heart in the church of the novitiate; and Messrs. Beardwood,

builders, who had likewise been largely employed by the Rev. Mother, testified their respect for her memory by having a companion window executed and placed over the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

Eloquent tongues pronounced her praises; gifted pens recorded her deeds; the people in their artless fashion discoursed of her, as of a friend, to one another and to God. "There were few living saints for whom I had so much esteem," wrote Dr. Gillooly, Lord Bishop of Elphin, "and very few departed friends for whom I have prayed with so much fervour—although I feel confident that her soul was already perfectly purified by trials and sufferings before death, and that she was immediately admitted to her reward." A writer in one of the public journals following a train of thought suggested by certain events of then recent occurrence, and alluding to the trophies and captives paraded in heroic days at the victor's funeral procession, recalls to memory the beneficent works of this valiant woman, and marshals as the trophies and captives of Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead—three thousand children daily receiving free education in the schools of her Order; hundreds of penitent victims snatched from a life of shame; and multitudes of grateful poor restored to health in the wards of her great hospital.

Throughout the country, especially in districts where the schools of the Sisters of Charity were established, the name of the Mother Superior was as well known as that of the bishop of the diocese. "So your Rev. Mother, Mrs. Aikenhead, is dead," wrote a farmer of the south to one of his relatives, a lay sister in the congregation; "that matchless woman! In her, Ireland's poor have lost their best friend; no other woman ever did so much for them."

Her abiding monument is the congregation which she founded; which she inspired with her spirit of labour and of love, and rooted in the rock of Peter. Generation will succeed generation of the Sisters of Charity, and still, as time rolls on, it will be said of them that they "*continued in good life and in holy conversation, so that they were acceptable both to God and to men, and to all that dewll in the land.*"

END OF BOOK IV.

# SUPPLEMENT.

# SUPPLEMENT.

1858—1875.

## I.

### ELECTION OF A SUPERIOR-GENERAL.

THE constitutions of the Sisters of Charity give the superior-general the power of nominating a vicaress, to govern the congregation during the interval between her demise and the election of her successor. Mrs. Aikenhead availed herself of this privilege, and in one of her severe illnesses addressed the following note to Mrs. Clifford, the rectress of the novitiate house :—

"*The Sisters of Charity, Our Lady's Mount,*
"*Harold's Cross, 23rd February,* 1855.

"My dear Mother Mary Lucy,

"In consequence of my present state of illness, I cannot but feel that it is very possible this malady may increase, and so render me incapable of writing the appointment of our dear Mother Helena Bridget MacCarthy, called in our congregation Sister Francis Magdalen, to the office of *Vicaress:* according to the 'Constitutions,' chap. viii,, sec. 4.

"Yours affectionately in J. C.,
"Mary Aikenhead, called Sister Mary Austin."

In the absence of the archbishop, who was on his way to Rome, the vicar-general, Monsignor Meagher, ratified this appointment on the day following Mrs. Aikenhead's death.

As by the rescript of 1843 the foundress was appointed superior-general for life, it had never been necessary to assemble the congregation for an election. Although the constitutions gave the outlines of what should be done on such an occasion, and prescribed the

selecting in each house of deputies who were to attend the general assembly, they entered into no particulars as to how all this was to be carried out. The difficulty was discussed with Mrs. Aikenhead some months before her death, and her advice was that, when it became necessary, the congregation should claim the assistance of the Society of Jesus. The vicaress therefore addressed herself to Father Daniel Jones. By his kind exertions he procured for her the invaluable aid of the Rev. Dr. Edmund O'Reilly, S.J., with whom she had no previous acquaintance, but who was the person of all others most calculated to be of use. Dr. O'Reilly lent himself to the work with such earnestness as to remind one of St. Ignatius, who, when framing the constitutions of the Society of Jesus, prayed during forty days for light before coming to a decision on an apparently trifling point: for when Dr. O'Reilly's opinion was asked on what to a casual observer might seem a matter of little moment, he deferred for several days giving his reply, repeating each time he was pressed for it, that he had not yet weighed the question sufficiently. Finally, he arranged the formulas for the domestic and general assemblies, based on those of the Society of Jesus; and they were so clear, so simple, and withal so full, that they entirely met the exigencies of the case, and gave such satisfaction that at the assembly of the congregation an ordinance was made prescribing that those formulas should be used on all future occasions.

The vicaress, with the sanction of the ecclesiastical superior, convoked the assembly for the election of a superior-general for the month of October, and on the 16th the rectresses of the different houses with the deputies, two from each convent, arrived at Our Lady's Mount. The assembly consisted of thirty members, presided over by the Very Rev. Monsignor Meagher, vicar-general of the diocese, who was delegated by the archbishop, not yet returned from Rome, to represent him on the occasion. Mrs. MacCarthy was elected by twenty-six votes; and on the same day a letter was forwarded to the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen, who, on receipt of it, wrote as follows to the new superior-general:—

"*Irish College, Rome, 30th October*, 1858.

"My dear Mrs. MacCarthy,

"I beg to offer you my warmest congratulations on your election to be Superioress-General of the Sisters of Charity. I am confident that your appointment will be the source of great blessings to the most valuable congregation over which you have to preside, and that it will continue to prosper as it did under the care and direction of the late lamented Mrs. Aikenhead.

"The unanimity with which the sisters made their choice is a proof of the spirit of union and charity that prevails among them, and must convince you that in the management of affairs you will have their full support.

"As far as I am concerned in your care I can assure you that I have heard of your election with great satisfaction, and I promise that I shall do everything in my power to aid you in carrying out the spirit of your excellent congregation.

"Though I am congratulating you on your appointment, I feel that you must consider that you have been obliged to assume a heavy burden and great responsibility. Such, indeed, is the case, but with the blessing and assistance of heaven you will be able to discharge all your duties and to promote the honour and glory of God. It requires all the assistance of heaven to fulfil the duties of a superioress, but when these duties are performed with charity and humility, God gives all necessary assistance, and blesses everything that is undertaken. I hope that with His divine aid the burden placed on you will be light, and that all your undertakings will be successful.

"I hope Mrs. Clifford's health is improving. She was very delicate when I last saw her. I hope also that the other ladies are well. Be so good as to remember me to them, and to engage their prayers for me.

"His Holiness is in excellent health, and has sent you all his blessing.

"Wishing you every grace and happiness, I remain, with great esteem,

"Your devoted servant,

✠ "PAUL CULLEN."

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## II.

### OUR LADY OF BENADA.

IN the month of July of this year (1858), the legal conveyance under the Encumbered Estates Court of the property of Benada having been made over to the Sisters of Charity by the proprietor, Father Jones, who seemed to think that possession should be taken with least possible delay, Mrs. MacCarthy, then only vicaress, being unable to leave Dublin herself, sent down three of her community to represent the congregation—two of these being sisters of the reverend founder of Our Lady of Benada, were made parties to the conveyance.

Mrs. Jones, who was at Benada Abbey, managed to make the taking possession a complete ovation. She had triumphal arches erected at intervals from the boundary of the estate to the demesne gate; the tenantry lined the roads, and music, pine-torches, and tar-barrels gave animation to the scene. The country around was illuminated with bonfires; and when the tenants had tired themselves with singing, dancing, and speech-making, they adjourned to the village, where, at Mrs. Jones's expense, they were most hospitably entertained, and continued their merriment until dawn.

On the following day they were called on to atorn—that is, to sign a legal document acknowledging a new landlord—but as two of the nuns were "their own ladies," they did not feel they were quite

severed from the old proprietor. After about three weeks' stay at Benada the Sisters of Charity returned to Dublin.

It was necessary to build a school, and to have repairs and alterations made in the house. These works could not be carried on with great expedition in so remote a part of the country, and it was not until August, 1862, that all was in readiness for the opening of the mission at Benada. By a remarkable coincidence, though not adverted to at the time, the day on which the Blessed Sacrament was placed in the chapel of the new convent, was the feast of St. Augustine, the patriarch of the Order to which the place had formerly belonged; and it may also be mentioned as an interesting link connecting the ancient with the present religious institution that a chalice bearing an inscription which proves it to have been a gift of piety to the Augustinian monastery was given to the convent, and is used for the celebration of the sacred mysteries.

Providentially, the visitation of the sick-poor commenced at a period when the people, although they had suffered much from a succession of bad harvests, were about to suffer still more from the same cause. Their miseries were so great that many of them had sunk into a state of despondency, which led to the neglect of religious duties, and in some cases to open murmuring against Divine Providence. But when they found that there were those amongst them who felt for their sorrows and were willing to the best of their power to assist and comfort them, these feelings changed, and it began to be observed that many now attended Mass who had not been seen in the chapel for years. Persons hitherto indifferent about the most essential duties of religion, eagerly crowded to the school of the convent on Sundays and holidays to join in the rosary and to listen to instruction with the most edifying devotion and attention; and such was their primitive simplicity and docility, that men as well as women came, without any inconvenience resulting from the practice.

Suitable devotions and instructions were also held on week-day evenings during Lent, in the month of May, on days of devotion, and for novenas preparatory to the greater feasts; and these, too, were attended by surprising numbers for a country place, where distance and constant occupation in field labours throw many obstacles in the way of such practices. From the very first the cultivation of singing among the young people was found of the greatest utility—not only attracting them to the instructions, but inducing even their parents to attend. At the social meetings of the people profane ballads and songs of a questionable character began to give place to hymns and sacred songs, and thus a knowledge of the most essential truths was conveyed to the minds of some it would hardly otherwise reach.

Another source of spiritual benefit to the peasantry the nuns soon found in the diffusion of cheap religious books. Facilities were

afforded at the convent for procuring prayer-books, manuals of instruction, and also beads, crosses, and other objects of devotion. Before very long hundreds and even thousands of pious books were sold to the country people, and it became customary for persons going to America or to England to provide themselves with a little library of such works.

When the sisters first attended the parish chapel they remarked with sorrow that only two or three persons received holy communion on the first Sunday of the month, and that even on great feasts the number was but little increased. However, after a few years a great change was observable in this respect likewise. Several were seen to approach the holy table every Sunday, while on the first Sunday of the month, and on feast days, the number of communicants rose to between seventy and eighty; and this zeal and devotion were the more admirable seeing that the only Mass in the parish chapel was at twelve o'clock, and many of the poor people were obliged not only to fast till a late hour, but to travel a long way to and from the chapel.

Soon after the establishment of the convent at Benada the manufacture of linen, diaper, and similar fabrics was undertaken with a view to benefit the poor by remunerative employment rather than by alms. For several years this work was carried on, the people received with gratitude the little addition thus afforded to their means, and many were saved from the poorhouse or from beggary.

The school at Benada was opened on the 8th of June, 1863—upwards of sixty children presenting themselves for admission. This was a large number for a thinly populated district; but when it became generally known that the nuns' classes were in operation, the attendance became much more numerous. In fact, with the exception of about six weeks in the spring and autumn, when field labour prevented the children attending school, the daily average reached one hundred and twenty.

The year 1865 was made sadly memorable by the death of Mrs. Jones, who is justly regarded as co-founder, with her son, of Our Lady of Benada. Always self-forgetting and helpful, Mrs. Jones cheered and sustained the sisters in the many difficulties and annoyances attendant on a new foundation in so remote a country place, and they considered it a disposition of Divine Providence in their favour that she was left with them for a year and a half after their settlement at Benada. Her generosity was remarkable up to the very end. So far from being troublesome or difficult of attendance in her last illness, her only anxiety seemed to be lest any one would be injured by an effort to afford her aid under her sufferings. She even appeared unwilling that her children should be made aware of her danger. A telegram was, notwithstanding, sent to Father Jones informing him of her state, and he hastened to her bedside, arriving about twelve hours

before she expired. With all the tenderness of a truly affectionate son and a holy priest he strove to fortify and prepare her still more and more for the awful passage to eternity. She received from his hand the holy communion for the last time, and then having spent the night in almost unceasing prayer, she breathed her last about half-past two on the morning of the 6th of April, while her devoted son was pronouncing over her the absolving words, and the sisters, kneeling around, repeated the prayers for a departing soul.

The following night her remains rested in the convent chapel, and the next day the Bishops of Achonry and Elphin, and a large number of priests, came to assist at the office and High Mass, and to offer individually the holy sacrifice for the repose of her soul. All likewise attended her funeral and joined in the chanting of psalms, as the procession, consisting of the school children clad in white, followed by the sisters, the priests, and the two bishops, with a concourse of the country people, wended its way to the private cemetery of the family. The Bishop of Achonry, Dr. Durcan, would himself perform the funeral rites at the grave, for he and all the clergy of the diocese were anxious to testify their esteem and regard for the departed, and at the same time to give proof of their sympathy with Father Jones. At the head of the grave in which Mrs. Jones is buried stands a granite cross of the ancient Irish form which she had herself erected to the memory of her husband. On one side of the base a marble slab has been inserted bearing an inscription dedicated to her memory.

Kilmactigue, the parish in which Benada is situated, possesses a holy well bearing the name of St. Attracta, and once had a church dedicated under her invocation. A traditionary devotion to the saint had been maintained in the district, and Father Jones, desiring earnestly to see it animated with new life and fervour, pressed the bishop to apply for a rescript permitting the celebration throughout the diocese of a proper Mass and office on the feast of St. Attracta, using at the same time all the influence he had at Rome to obtain this privilege. The application was successful. Pope Pius IX. gave the rescript, requiring, however, that a church should be dedicated in her name. To comply with this condition, the principal church in the parish, which, though built several years before on a plot of ground given by Father Jones's father, had not yet been blessed, was solemnly dedicated under the title of St. Attracta. After the ceremony of dedication High Mass was celebrated, and an eloquent and learned sermon preached by Archdeacon O'Rorke to show the saint's claims to the veneration of the faithful. At the conclusion of these functions the bishop proceeded to give the sacrament of confirmation to about eight hundred persons, a great number of whom had been prepared and instructed at the convent.

In course of time the community at Benada having been in-

creased to seven members, and the power of extending the sphere of their labours having likewise been facilitated by the acquisition of a small car and a jennet, visits to the sick were made from that time forward to distances of five or six miles; and remote parish chapels began to be regularly visited for the purpose of catechising the ignorant in their neighbourhood and preparing the children for the sacraments.

A suggestion having been made to Father Jones that a mission would probably work much good in Kilmactigue, and arouse the people to a greater appreciation of the advantages of the establishment of a convent of Sisters of Charity in their neighbourhood, he used his influence with the bishop, the administrator of the parish, and his own brethren to obtain that blessing. He succeeded, and in the month of May, 1867, the mission was given by four of the Jesuit Fathers. The nuns were happily able in many ways to forward the success of the mission. Their car conveyed the Fathers to and from the house they lodged in, which was two miles from the chapel; they gave the music for benediction every evening, and supplied from the convent all that was required for the holy function. Moreover, they accompanied the school children to the catechetical instructions, and had hymns sung at intervals during the time allotted to that exercise. Two processions, which took place during the mission and gave much edification, were, with the exception of the part taken by the priests themselves, entirely organised and carried out by the sisters.

Early in 1869, Father Jones, although in delicate health, paid a visit to Benada, and having in a short exhortation explained how a plenary indulgence might be obtained by all who received it with befitting dispositions, gave to the people the Papal benediction, the power of imparting which (usually given only to bishops) he had obtained from Pope Pius IX. during a recent visit to Rome. This was the last of Father Jones's public acts in his birth-place. His strength completely gave way about the beginning of the month of April in the same year, and he retired to the noviceship house of his order at Milltown Park, near Dublin. Over this house he had presided a few years before as rector and novice-master, having been the first appointed to the latter office when the Irish Jesuits were constituted a distinct province of the Society. In this house, which he had indefatigably laboured to establish in the full spirit of the institute, and shortly after his nomination as Provincial, he breathed his last on the 2nd of June, 1869. In him the community of Our Lady of Benada lost their founder, their zealous friend, and constant benefactor. But the work he inaugurated in his native place has grown from year to year—spreading light, cultivating piety, and conferring incalculable blessings on the population of a remote rural district.

## III.

### ST. MARY'S ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND.

IN August, 1858—Mrs. MacCarthy being still vicaress—Monsignor Yore, vicar-general of the diocese of Dublin, applied to the Sisters of Charity to take charge of St. Mary's Asylum for the Blind, an institution which he had lately founded and temporarily located in a small house in Lower Dominick-street. All that the zealous founder could at that moment obtain was a promise that the sisters from Stanhope-street would visit it for a few hours every day; and this they commenced doing on the 2nd of October, the feast of the Guardian Angels. Applications for admission became so numerous that the accommodation afforded by the temporary residence was found lamentably insufficient, and it became necessary to remove to a larger house. The old Portobello Hotel, which happened to be for disposal, was taken; the poor blind girls were removed to it in the month of October, 1859; and on the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the same year the venerable founder's ardent desire was gratified by the Sisters of Charity taking the entire charge of the institution. On that day the Holy Sacrifice was offered for the first time in the little chapel of the asylum by Monsignor Yore in presence of the mother-general and the Sisters of Charity, a few friends of the institution, and the blind inmates, who sang their first Mass to the wonder and delight of all present. Mrs. MacCarthy left on that day a community of six sisters to begin the regular work of St. Mary's Asylum.

Difficulties had of course to be encountered, and disappointments to be endured, in the early days of the institution, and yet it prospered beyond all hopes and expectations. It was designed to be a self-supporting institution, or at any rate one which would largely contribute to its own maintenance; but the poor blind, utterly unaccustomed to industry, ignorant of the commonest things, dispirited as they almost invariably were on their first entrance, seemed the most unpromising material out of which to form an industrial class. It was necessary to begin at the beginning in every department, and the attempts made were so awkward that the virtue of hope had to be exercised to a most unusual degree. Among other difficulties may be mentioned the impossibility of getting anyone to teach them the one branch of industry which they were supposed capable of acquiring, namely, mat-making. Fortunately, however, one of the sisters many years before when visiting the county gaol in Cork saw the prisoners

making mats and had the method explained to her; on her return home she got up a rude construction consisting of a board and nails, and twisting together some cordage (in default of cocoa-nut fibre) to form the material, she succeeded in making a mat which survived the wear and tear of sixteen years. This sister's inventive talent was now called into requisition; she set about teaching the blind, and succeeded so well that, having been provided with the fibre and a frame, they turned out excellent and saleable mats. After that followed instruction in basket-making, weaving, knitting of every kind, singing, organ and pianoforte playing; all of which seemed to promise the means of present occupation and amusement, and a chance of future support to these poor children of night. Steadily and well they advanced in every department of industrial education—thanks to the patience and kindness of their teachers.

Still more satisfactory was the progress made in the training of the heart and soul. Doubly alive to inward impressions, and sensitively organised as the blind generally are, their spiritual nature is capable of high cultivation, and under proper influences happiness flows into their life as a consequence. They can be led by kindness very far, and by religion to the highest point. In the first place they are made to consider themselves the personal friends and children of the sisters, and to understand that they are capable of being useful members of society. They are taught the highest principles of rectitude, and governed not by fear or punishment, but by their own sense of right, the voice of God, and conscience. These perceptions become most delicate in them, and supersede all necessity for correction. It frequently happens that on certain days, when rewards are assigned to the children for good conduct, regularity, or other praiseworthy qualities, some of them come forward to say that there must be some mistake, that they do not deserve what they have received, that they committed such and such acts contrary to what they are commended for. Justice and truth are virtues to which they seem disposed by nature.

With regard to the intellectual culture of the blind, it has been found that once a thirst for knowledge is excited it becomes exceedingly intense, doubtless because the inward eye is quick in proportion as objects of sense are excluded. They stimulate each other more than ordinary children do when learning in class, for, as the instruction is oral and general, the eagerness to pick up what is said lest it should not be repeated is very great, and is communicated like wildfire through the whole circle. Learning is to them a real pleasure. A new branch of study, the explanation of some difficulty, a story or an example delights them. The literary portion of their education consists principally of the catechism, Bible history, general history, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. Their memory is wonderful, and knowledge once acquired is rarely lost.

Their recreations are of an intellectual, or at any rate of a refined order. In the evening an amusing book is read to them, and this they enjoy beyond measure. Occasionally they have a theatrical performance, and it is astonishing how intuitively and intelligently they enter into the difficult and dissimilar characters they personate. Care of course is taken that the play they perform shall be of a high tone, and calculated to confirm every noble, generous, and religious impression. Great are the preparations made for one of these entertainments, great is the pleasure it confers, and remarkable, too, the intellectual energy it stimulates. In fact it was considered quite a brilliant discovery in their training—this idea of a theatrical performance. The natural talent for music which the blind proverbially display is carefully cultivated. It has a refining influence on them, and contributes in no small degree to the happiness of their daily life. Many perform very difficult pieces on the organ, or on the piano or the harp, while nearly all can sing. Sacred music they excel in, and seem to find inexpressibly congenial to their disposition. They have performed church services in different public chapels with great success, they have given public concerts, and in the institution itself they have a remarkably good choir. Indeed the voice of song is seldom silent in St. Mary's Asylum for the Blind.

On the 1st of April, 1861, a general meeting of the friends and supporters of the institution was held in the chapel and presided over by the archbishop. The first report was read and approved, and it was proposed to build a new asylum for the female blind at a short distance from the city, wherein three hundred inmates could be accommodated, and where they would have the advantage of pure air, open fields, and all the help, conveniences, and improvements attainable in an institution expressly designed and built with a view to the wants and comforts of the blind. At this meeting was present Mr. Edward Sweetman, a valued friend of the asylum. This gentleman had a singular attraction towards the blind, travelled to London and Paris in order to gain information regarding their treatment, and on his return home devoted himself to the care of blind boys, without however withdrawing his friendship from the poor girls at St. Mary's. This meeting had the effect of making the institution better known. In the following year it was brought still more prominently before the public; for the Earl of Carlisle, then Viceroy of Ireland, having visited the asylum, expressed himself greatly gratified with all he saw, and appointed the 1st of March for a concert to be given by the blind in one of the public buildings of the city, promising to be present himself at the performance. His Excellency was as good as his word, and a large and influential audience assembled in the concert-room. The poor blind performers were in high spirits and full of nerve, for they fancied they were screened from the view of the assembly by a

curtain. One tiny creature was led forward to present an address to the Lord Lieutenant, and a little scene was improvised greatly to the gratification of his Excellency. The general audience were astonished at the proficiency shown by the poor girls.

About this time the founder, Monsignor Yore, was suffering much anxiety on account of the funds at his disposal failing to meet the expenditure at St. Mary's. The establishment was in fact sinking into debt. He therefore proposed that Mrs. MacCarthy should take on herself the entire responsibility of the institution and separate it from the male asylum, with which it had been associated, in so far at least as that both depended on a common fund. Mrs. MacCarthy readily acquiesced, and an arrangement was entered into which proved satisfactory to all parties. Monsignor Yore gratefully remembered the mother-general's frank acceptance of the responsibility, and he most generously assisted in the liquidation of the debt which had been incurred. This arrangement came into effect on the 11th of September, 1862, which date was thenceforth considered to mark the foundation day of St. Mary's Asylum for the Blind.

Such was the progress made by the pupils in the different branches of education that it was thought advisable to hold a public examination somewhat later in the season in the Round room of the Rotundo. Accordingly the examination took place—the archbishop presiding, and a great concourse of the citizens assembling to witness the proceedings. "Nothing could be more gratifying than the result," writes one highly interested in the cause. "The literary activity of the children had been quickened to the highest pitch, and they seemed to think that the honour of the Blind Asylum, of the Sisters of Charity, and almost of religion itself depended upon them. If the eyes of Europe were not on them, the eyes of the country were, or ought to be. So they behaved themselves as those on whom a great responsibility is laid should do, and acquitted themselves gallantly." The poor children gave such a comprehensive and luminous sketch of the history of religion and the Church, that a clergyman who was present went afterwards to the asylum to ask the title of the book in which so admirable a summary was to be found. No book, however, was there to refer to. The information had been drawn from many sources, communicated orally to the blind, retained in their capacious memory, and then delivered in their simple and accurate style.

The death, in 1864, of the venerable founder of St. Mary's Asylum for the Blind, Monsignor Yore, is thus referred to by the writer we have just quoted:—"The deepest grief the inmates of St. Mary's had yet known they experienced this year, in the loss of their friend, father, and founder, the beloved and venerated Dr. Yore, who slept in the Lord on the 13th day of February. They were the Benjamins of his flock, the last, and perhaps it is true to say, the dearest of his

children. That great heart, which had never grown old, found room more than sufficient in its breadth and depth for the poor blind. He loved them, and thought them all perfection. A party arrived one day from a country workhouse, as miserable-looking as we may suppose such a party should be; but he was all admiration. 'I just saw them coming in,' said he; 'nine as beautiful girls as you could see!' His mind was constantly occupied about them, and he thought himself quite over-paid for his anxieties by the success of the asylum. It was his delight to visit them, to listen to their happy voices, to bring them some little treat, or procure them a gratification. It is a happy and cherished thought, and one that shall live in the traditions of the institution, that that long and beautiful life was made much brighter and much more beautiful at its close by the expansion of its charity towards the hitherto forgotten and unheeded blind; and that the objects of his solicitude repaid to the utmost of their power, in gratitude and veneration, the love that was poured out upon them. It was the singular privilege of the superior of St. Mary's to attend faithfully and most affectionately the death-bed of this dear friend with whom she was associated in the holy work of ameliorating the condition of this so sad portion of the great Master's flock."

Although so much needed and so much desired, the new home for the blind, "the big house in the field," as the poor children themselves called it, remained still a castle in the air. In the year 1865, however, a great step was made towards its acquisition. Some ladies who thought St. Mary's was not patronised by the public as it deserved to be, formed themselves into a committee to beg aid for its pressing wants; going from door to door they represented the claims of the poor blind, and succeeded so well in their charitable efforts as to be able to hand in between three and four hundred pounds as a beginning of the building fund. About the same time new friends appeared as if heaven-sent: among them were Mr. James F. Lombard, Mr. Edward MacMahon, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Peter Paul MacSwiney. These good friends proposed the getting-up of a monster bazaar—the Lord Mayor giving as the first prize his coach and horses. No sooner had the announcement been made than presents poured in from all sides. A committee formed of the commercial young men of Dublin took on themselves the whole labour and responsibility of the undertaking, and night after night worked far into the small hours to make the bazaar for the blind a great success. Their charitable efforts were blessed; the bazaar was held on the 30th and 31st of May, 1866, and when all was wound up the committee handed the rectress of St. Mary's the enormous sum of £4,000 as the result of their exertions.[1]

[1] The first prize was won by a person living in Scotland, and great was the sensation caused by the landing at the quay of Glasgow of the coach and horses of the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

The great desire of the friends of the blind children was that their new home, albeit a "big house in a field," should be situated in the vicinity of the sea, for it had been represented to them that sea air was the best remedy for scrofula, a disease from which several of the poor blind had suffered greatly. After a time, Merrion Castle, a residence standing in a demesne of thirty-three acres, and on the skirts of the bay of Dublin, was advertised for sale; inquiries were made in the interest of the Sisters of Charity, negotiations were entered into, and finally the castle with its grounds passed into the possession of the congregation. On the 26th of July, 1866, the first Mass was celebrated in the new convent, on which occasion the blind children who formed the choir were brought from Portobello to sing during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. A site for the new asylum was soon selected, but an unexpected difficulty arose. It was necessary to remove a number of trees; and the guardians of the owner of the estate, the Earl of Pembroke then a minor, would not consent to this until after a seven months' correspondence had been carried on. Meanwhile, however, Miss MacDonnell, a devoted and generous friend of the blind, took entire charge of the premises, and the poor girls were sent out in detachments to the castle to enjoy the benefit of the sea air. At length all was ready for the laying of the foundation of the new edifice, but, as the archbishop had been summoned to Rome, the ceremony was deferred until his return.

During Dr. Cullen's stay in the Eternal City, Pope Pius IX. conferred on him the dignity of cardinal. Immediately after his return to Ireland, his Eminence signified his intention of presiding at the ceremony of laying the first stone of the asylum—the first ceremony in which he officiated as a Prince of the Church. A great concourse assembled on the appointed day, the 18th of September, 1866; the scene was imposing, and the blind girls sang the *Te Deum* with all the fervour of grateful hearts.

There was one drawback to the general pleasure, namely, the absence of Mr. George Godfrey Place, one of the earliest and most devoted friends of the blind. Failing health deprived him of the enjoyment he had long looked forward to of seeing the foundation laid of the new asylum. However, he himself and all concerned in the institution hoped that he might live to see the structure completed. But it was not the will of God that this should be. In the following year, on the 22nd of July, he visited Merrion, spoke most affectionately to the blind who happened to be there, and examined with great interest the part of the building which was then in progress. That night at ten o'clock he was struck down by an attack of paralysis, which terminated his valuable life at two o'clock next morning. A number of the blind were present at his funeral, and many were the

tears they shed when they heard the clay fall on the coffin of one whom they always felt to be more than a friend to them.

When a sufficient portion of the building had been completed the removal from Portobello was undertaken. It was no easy task to accomplish this, for there were in the institution more than one hundred poor creatures quite helpless on account of their blindness, and of course unable to render any assistance in removing their beds, clothes, working materials, &c. However, on the 14th of August, 1868, the migration was happily accomplished. The health of the children rapidly improved, and the enjoyment of the fresh air seemed to be like a new sense to them. Their delight may be imagined when they were allowed to take their tea on the lawn, while the newly-mown hay perfumed the air; and it is hardly necessary to say that they fully appreciated the change from the little rooms at Portobello to the spacious apartments at Merrion, through which the sweetly-tempered sea-breeze could freely circulate.

Mr. Lentaigne of Paris, visiting the asylum in 1871, noticed with regret that the institution was not provided with certain appliances which were found useful in promoting the improvement of the blind in Continental establishments. He promised to present some writing machines; but on his return home, finding that it would be necessary to have persons taught in France how to use the machines, he requested that some of the sisters might be sent to Paris for that purpose. The mother-general having given the necessary permission, and the Cardinal Archbishop cordially approving, the rectress of St. Mary's and a sister (the niece of Mr. Lentaigne) left for Paris in the month of November, 1871. While in that city they lived in the convent of the Blind Sisters of St. Paul, who kindly gave them all the information they required. In less than a month they returned with writing machines and much useful experience, which they made no delay in turning to practical account.

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## IV.

### KILKENNY CONVENT.

ON the 1st of August, 1861, the Convent of Our Lady of the Annunciation was founded in the city of Kilkenny. Some time previous to this date a worthy citizen, Mr. John Scott, bequeathed a sum of £150 per annum to the Sisters of Charity in Kilkenny, which sum was to become available for the purpose specified on the death of his widow. As there

was no convent of Sisters of Charity in that place, it became necessary to make a foundation lest the bequest should become a lapsed legacy, and the Bishop of Ossory, Dr. Walsh, wrote to the ecclesiastical superior of the congregation, requesting that this should be done without delay. There were only two houses to be let in the city which seemed at all suitable for a convent. One of these was taken, but it was miserably small, much out of repair, every way inconvenient, and unprovided with a garden or even a good yard. In this domicile the four sisters who were at first sent down spent a somewhat penal term, until, fourteen months later, an adjoining house was taken and a better order of things established.

But, if space was limited, so was not the work. The board of guardians passed a resolution that the Sisters of Charity should have free access to the Catholic inmates of the workhouse; and this privilege was at once availed of for the comfort and instruction of the poor people. The nuns were soon seen, to the surprise and delight of the people, wending their way through the lanes and suburbs of the city, where they found a sad amount of ignorance and sin owing to the small number of female schools, and the want of charitable institutions for the prevention of crime and the reformation of youth. The Christian Brothers had no school-room for a junior class of boys, and numbers of little lads from eight years of age to twelve were idling about the streets all day. The sisters, having no room in their premises in which they could give religious instruction, met the catechism class in an old tenement at some distance; and there, too, they collected the junior boys, and taught them reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as the catechism, until the Christian Brothers were able, in 1863, to take charge of them.

Religious instruction was given by the sisters in several of the national schools throughout the city; catechism was taught by them in different parish churches; and not satisfied with visiting and relieving the sick-poor in their houses, the sisters established a small dispensary at the convent under the patronage of St. Martin, where they distributed food, clothing, and medicine to the destitute.

Having laboured hard under adverse circumstances for about eleven years, a better state of things began for them on the accession of Dr. Moran to the See of Ossory. The new bishop was consecrated in March, 1872, and soon after his arrival in Kilkenny visited the Sisters of Charity, and kindly assured them that his first concern should be to build a convent for them. Soon afterwards his lordship convened a meeting for the purpose of adopting measures for the erection of a convent and a building suitable for an Industrial School. The meeting was held on a Sunday at the Tholsel. It was numerously attended, and a sum of £500 was collected on the occasion.

On Pentecost Sunday of the same year a sermon was preached at

High Mass in the cathedral for the Sisters of Charity. After the religious ceremonies of the feast were concluded, the bishop and the congregation went in procession to Deansby, a country place situated close to the city, where his lordship laid the first stone of the convent and school. Many of the influential gentlemen of Kilkenny spoke on the occasion in favour of the charity, and more money was collected. In the following month the building was commenced.

Shortly afterwards a number of the blind girls of St. Mary's were brought to Kilkenny for the purpose of giving musical entertainments in aid of the undertaking. Afternoon and evening concerts were given, which produced a considerable sum over and above expenses. Much more would have been realised if a room could have been obtained large enough to accommodate the numbers who were anxious to hear the blind girls play and sing. St. Mary's choir gave the music at the twelve o'clock Mass in the cathedral on the Sunday they were in Kilkenny. Rich and poor came in crowds when they heard that the blind were to perform. Indeed they created the greatest interest, and many presents were sent to them while they remained at the convent. Their appearance on the scene did good in another way also, for their high state of training afforded a convincing proof that the Sisters of Charity were quite competent to take charge of an industrial school.

In the month of March, 1873, the industrial school was certified for fifteen children at that time, and for one hundred when there would be sufficient accommodation provided for that number. A few days later the bishop blessed a cottage at Danesby in which the children were to be temporarily lodged, and in the course of the following month the fifteen places were filled up. The beginning was small, but the work was interesting; and the bishop, who came nearly every day to watch the progress of the building, brought all who visited him from Dublin or elsewhere to see the cottage, and showed the little tenement, and the stables turned into school-rooms, and all the other contrivances, with as much importance as if Danesby and its belongings were a magnificent institution.

According as each part of the new building was finished the nuns and the children took possession of the premises. By the end of the year the entire community had removed from the town, and there were forty-three children in the industrial school. In a year from that time, that is to say, in December, 1874, the complement of one hundred was nearly filled up; and, after yet another short interval, there was not a vacancy in the industrial ranks.

Other necessary buildings have since been commenced, including a chapel of handsome design; but the original cottage is religiously preserved, and, serving many good purposes still, stands in the field a picture of cheerful homeliness.

## V.

### ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHANAGE.

THE next foundation in order of time was that of St. Joseph's Orphanage, Mountjoy-street, Dublin. On the 19th of March, 1866, the Sisters of Charity took charge of an institution which had been in existence for nearly a century, having owed its origin to the charity of two humble tradesmen, who, passing over Essex Bridge one evening in the year 1770, had their attention attracted by the pitiful cry of an infant. Proceeding to the spot whence the sounds seemed to come, they discovered a poor deserted child, and kindly took it up. As neither could afford to take on himself the support of the little one, while both felt that charity forbade their abandoning it, they resolved to make a collection among their neighbours. So many kind-hearted persons offered their assistance that the good men were enabled not only to place at nurse the forsaken little creature they had found on the bridge, but also to provide for other destitute children, both boys and girls. Soon the orphan family increased to a considerable number; contributions flowed in; a society under the patronage of St. Joseph was organised for the government of the institution, and a house was rented in which the children were lodged, supported, and educated.

At the time that the Sisters of Charity were asked to take the sole charge of the orphanage it was under the care of a worthy person, Miss Byrne by name, who had been appointed matron by the governor, the Rev. James MacMahon. Miss Byrne continued in the orphanage after the community had taken possession of the establishment, but did not survive more than three years. Her death was much regretted by the sisters, to whom she showed the greatest respect and obedience, and by the children, who had the deepest affection for her. The institution has continued to prosper under the care of the sisters, and thanks to the aid of a charitable public never deaf to an appeal in behalf of the destitute orphan.

The Mountjoy-street community have also the charge of St. Mary's parochial schools, King's Inns-street. These schools, the oldest in the metropolitan parish, were originally located in Liffey-street, and had been confided by Archbishop Murray to the care of a committee of ladies among whom were Mrs. John O'Brien, Mrs. Anthony O'Brien, Miss Dease and Miss Denis; while the Sisters of Charity were appointed to give religious instruction to the children. Having been removed to Abbey-street for better accommodation, these schools

were eventually transferred thence to premises built for them by the archbishop in King's Inns-street. His Grace then placed the schools under the Board of National Education; gave the Sisters of Charity the entire charge of conducting them; appointed Mrs. O'Brien manager, or correspondent with the Board; named one of his senior priests as guardian, and reserved to himself the rights of patron.

Mrs. O'Brien, until invalided by old age, visited the schools at least once a week, but frequently much oftener; and, as during the earlier years professed sisters could not be spared for these schools, and the charge had to be trusted to novices, her sympathy and assistance were invaluable. Her very name kept unruly children in check, and her kind devoted charity to the poor won the hearts of all. The first generation of children as they grew up and married, used to make their appearance once more at the school, bringing their little ones by the hand, asking for Mrs. O'Brien, and invoking blessings on her head. The very poor among the children were nourished with soup made in her own house, and indeed her purse and her personal aid were always at the service of the institution. She was the first who encouraged the cultivation of music among the pupils by making a present to the school of two pianos and a harmonium.

In 1864, the daily attendance averaged between eight and nine hundred; there were four pupil teachers and twenty-eight paid monitresses. Even at that date the system of National education had reached in these schools the highest proficiency. While all the rules of the Board were attended to, the Sisters of Charity at the same time organised the schools according to a plan of their own, which obtained the marked approval of the head-inspector, Mr. W. A. Hunter, a Presbyterian gentleman, who in a special report observed that "there can be no question as to the educational value of this convent school being very great; no other convent school is so highly paid by the Board, very high results have been attained, the school would contrast most favourably for itself with the best of the ordinary National schools throughout Ireland generally." The same report refers to the success with which music, drawing, and French were taught; and to the fact that teachers had been supplied from King's Inns-street to many schools from time to time. "The effect," says Mr. Hunter, "of every well-conducted school upon education generally cannot be otherwise than favourable; in this way, this school has been beneficial both to the schools in the city and to schools at a greater distance. . . . The superior instruction for the middle classes, and the food and clothing for the destitute, form an attractive influence which other schools do not in general enjoy."[1]

[1] See Special Reports made to the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland on the convent schools in connection with the Board. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 20 June, 1864, pp. 77-78.

Many of the pupils entered convents in England and foreign countries, or became governesses; a larger number were enabled to earn their livelihood as school-mistresses, some obtained engagements for singing in choirs; and a few held situations as paid organists. Nevertheless, the success attained at that period was no more than an earnest of what the King's Inns-street schools have since become.[1]

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## VI.

### PROGRESS IN WATERFORD.

THE Community of Our Lady of Charity, Waterford, were requested in the year 1860 to take charge of an orphanage founded many years earlier in the city, but fallen into decay for want of proper management. They were most willing to add this work to their many avocations, and the only difficulty was to procure a suitable habitation for the orphans. Near the convent stood one of the three Danish forts, which, with the flanking walls, formed the original fortifications of this stronghold on the Suir. This picturesque object was commonly called the Green Tower,[2] and near it stood a fabric of more modern date, known as St. Martin's Castle. The committee of the orphanage resolved to purchase these premises, hoping that with a little additional expense they might be rendered habitable. On examination, however, it was found that the walls were in an unsafe condition, and that it would be advisable to take down the old buildings and erect a new edifice. Antiquarians were little pleased with the announcement that the fort was to be razed to the ground, but no means were taken to save the monument from demolition, and it was sacrificed to utilitarian purposes.

St. Martin's Castle soon disappeared: not so the Green Tower, which was less easily destroyed. Its walls were six feet thick, and a spiral staircase led to the roof, which was formed of large flag-stones strongly cemented and surrounded by a parapet. An idea prevailed among the workmen that a hidden treasure would somewhere be discovered

[1] See Appendix.

[2] The Catholic cathedral occupies the site of the second tower, while the third—a striking and interesting object—still holds its place on the quay. In Irish it is named Dundory, or the King's Fort, but it is popularly called Reginald's Tower, having been erected by Reginald, the Dane, in the year 1003. Raymond le Gros stormed the city in 1171, put the inhabitants to the sword, and imprisoned in this tower the Prince of the Danes of Waterford, together with several of the confederate Irish chiefs. "They were condemned to death, but saved by the intercession of Dermot Mac Morrogh, who with Fitzstephen, and many other English and Welsh gentlemen, came to Waterford to be present at the marriage of Earl Strongbow with Eva, the King of Leinster's daughter."

among the ruins. They found nothing, however, more valuable than an antique slipper, carefully hidden in a wall and filled with cherry-stones and red worsted. The lower part of the fort was preserved, so as to form a kind of buttress to the new building; and the joists of the flooring were made into stalls for the convent chapel—the wood, apparently yew, taking a high polish, but so tempered and hardened, that the carpenter declared he would not have done the job for any one but the Rev. Mother, for the wood was like brass and spoiled and broke his tools.

Thanks to the liberality of the bishop, Dr. O'Brien, and the generous contributions of the people of Waterford, the new building advanced rapidly, and was solemnly blessed on the Feast of St. Martin, November 11, 1862. The institution is now mainly supported by the industry of its orphan inmates, having an extensive well-appointed laundry, and workrooms in which hand sewing and various kinds of machine work are carried on. Aid is also given to its support by an annual collection in the city, and by the proceeds of a weekly penny subscription carried out by some kind-hearted artizans, who on Sundays give a portion of their time to this charitable quest.

Altogether the convent and its appurtenances form a group not devoid of picturesque and antiquarian interest. The original mansion fronting Lady-lane, with its thick walls and mahogany doors, was once the residence of the Recorder of Waterford. Adjoining it is a house, said to have been the mint. At the rere opens a pretty little garden on the old city wall. A short flight of steps leads down to another garden at the foot of the wall, and here the bases of the Green Tower are still discernable. From the second platform a covered bridge or gallery, constructed of corrugated iron and excellent timber work, has been thrown across a roadway, and forms a communication with an orchard, at the other side of which are the schools, having an entrance from Beresford-street.

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## VII.

### STAR OF THE SEA, TRAMORE.

A WORTHY gentleman, Mr. William Carroll, seeing how much good had been effected by the Sisters of Charity in Waterford, wished to obtain the same advantages for his own town of Tramore, and founded there the Convent of Our Lady, Star of the Sea. The building was commenced in 1863, and early in June, 1866, all was ready for the arrival of the nuns and the commencement of their charitable labours. The convent

premises include a very pretty chapel, a fine refectory and community-room, ten cells, convenient kitchen, dairy and offices, and a commodious school-house for 250 children. Possession was formally taken on the 24th of June, when the Blessed Sacrament was deposited in the chapel: a number of the neighbouring gentry assembling on the occasion, and the sisters from Waterford, with their choir, helping to make all go off with becoming solemnity. The visitors did not fail to remark the excellent arrangements of the group of buildings, planted on the highest part of the eminence rising from the shore, nor did they omit to admire the beauty and extent of the view commanded by the Star of the Sea.

In honour of the Feast of the Visitation it was proposed to begin the sick mission on the 2nd of July, and this, the primary duty of the institute, actually was begun on that day, though under very unusual circumstances; for Tramore being a remarkably healthy place, it was with difficulty a single invalid was discovered. Indeed, the sisters have never found their work excessive in this department. Seldom have they more than six or eight calls to make, and these are principally to persons dying of old age, or perhaps of cancer, or some such disease as may befall humanity anywhere. Poverty, however, has its victims in Tramore during the winter season, when employment cannot be obtained in the neighbourhood, and the Sisters of Charity, by the proceeds of an annual drawing of prizes, have been able to help the poor through the difficult part of the year.

As soon as the schools were opened, children flocked in from all sides. It was an agreeable surprise to find the little ones simple, intelligent, and most anxious for their own improvement. The nuns had not expected to discover these traits in a juvenile population kept at work all through the summer, attending on the motley groups of lodgers who congregate during the bathing season—"the Tramore harvest"—which enables the poor people to realise in a few months wherewithal to support their families through the rest of the year. So eager were the town children to learn that they made up for the disadvantage of their forced absence from school while the lodgers and bathers were about, by double diligence during their limited attendance. From the country parts children came with greater regularity, and displayed an equal thirst for knowledge. Often they arrived from a great distance, presenting themselves at the school at eight o'clock in the morning. Even the infants seemed to value the advantages the school afforded, among which a warm breakfast in winter must not be omitted. It is needless to say that the proficiency of such pupils is in keeping with their appreciation of the school, and renders the labour of their teachers comparatively light.

But if the children were remarkable for their simplicity of character, the same could not be said for the grown girls, whose longer

apprenticeship in the lodging service had given them a taste for liberty, amusement, and dress. Their manners had lost to some extent that refinement and reserve which Catholic girls under ordinary circumstances usually possess. They stood in need of refining influences. To meet this want the Sodality of the Children of Mary was established a little more than a year after the schools were opened. First the more grown girls attending the schools were proposed as candidates; these were afterwards joined by outsiders, and gradually the number of members reached one hundred. In piety and discipline they soon became a source of great consolation to the nuns, while their becoming demeanour, so much in contrast with their former levity, was universally remarked. Several of these girls, having got a good education in the schools, were afterwards received as choir nuns in different convents, while others took situations as nursery governesses, or got good posts in houses of business. Many in married life gave a good example in happy homes, and from some who emigrated to America satisfactory accounts were received, proving that in the midst of the dangers surrounding them they did not forget "the one thing necessary."

In order to offer some advantages to that part of the population whose education had been neglected, a Sunday school was opened. Many young persons gladly took advantage of this opportunity; and with them came a number of quite old women, all anxiety to get the benefit of the religious instruction given by the nuns. These aged scholars highly appreciated the lessons they received, which, indeed, seemed never long enough to satisfy their pious desires.

The community of Our Lady Star of the Sea, like so many other houses of the Order, have had ample reason to thank Divine Providence for the good friends that helped them through the difficulties which generally attend a new foundation. One gentleman proved a real friend in need: appointed himself their honorary agent; transacted outside business for them, giving time and thought without stint to the furtherance of their affairs; and not only laid out their garden, but was often seen late of a summer evening when the nuns were retiring for the night, weeding and thinning, and working like a common labourer to tidy and beautify their surroundings.

## VIII.

### JOTTINGS.

BY this time the Sisters of Charity had gained no small amount of experience. They had convents in a variety of localities:—in the heart of cities, in the centre of country towns, in the wide open country, and close to the seaside; while their work had brought them into communication with populations—all Irish, no doubt—yet differing greatly in circumstances and in points of character. Moreover, the houses of the congregation exhibited considerable divergencies from what might be called the convent type. Establishments of non-cloistered religious, it is hardly necessary to repeat, were unknown as an institution in this country until the Irish Sisters of Charity made their appearance; and their friends and providers, with the best intentions in the world, sometimes showed a strange misapprehension of the requirements of a community of nuns. People seemed to imagine that as the Sisters of Charity were not bound to enclosure, they could go into the open fields, or out on the public road for exercise; and thus it happened that in some instances they were for years obliged to dwell in houses unprovided even with a garden, and got no air or exercise except what their peregrinations through the very worst parts of a town afforded. In other instances their habitations were in the very noisiest quarters, and it was supposed that the being in a central locality left nothing to be desired.

In the early days of the home visitation the nuns were hardly prepared for the demonstrations of surprise and delight which greeted their appearance in the abodes of the poor. Wherever they had made a foundation, whether in Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Tramore, Kilkenny, Clonmel, Clarinbridge, or Benada, they were the first religious who had ever been seen outside a convent ministering to the spiritual and temporal wants of the destitute and afflicted. The people, whatever may be their faults, are at any rate thankful for kindness shown them, and invariably respectful to all who under legitimate sanction offer to advise or instruct them. Moreover, in the Sisters of Charity they were not slow to recognise that spirit of self-devotion and that genial charity, which they understood and knew how to practise themselves. Their outspoken admiration for these beneficent visitors, and their indignation whenever even seeming disrespect was by any chance shown them, were oftentimes quite ludicrous.

Here is the account of one who jotted down her recollections of the early days of a mission in a provincial town :—

"When first we began to visit the sick it was amusing to see the astonishment and hear the remarks of the poor people who had never before seen a nun out of a convent. They seemed to take it for granted that we had neither eyes nor ears. Fortunately we used at that time to wear our veils doubled, so it did not matter so much when we had to laugh heartily at the observations that were made on us.

"Passing through a lane we would hear one of the resident matrons calling to a neighbour :—

—— "'Biddy! run. Here's the new nuns comin'. Whist! They're stoppin' at Kitty Murphy's.'

—— "'Oh, ain't they lovely crathurs!' her friend would reply.

—— "'Arrah, Biddy, did you ever see such a beautiful crathur as the one near the wall? Thanks be to God that I seen that sight.'

"In another direction we would come unexpectedly on a pair of gossips too deeply engaged in conversation to perceive our approach for a moment or so.

—— "'Good-morrow, Nancy,' says one.

—— "'Good-morrow, kindly, Peggy,' responds the other.

—— "'Oh, then, I'm after seein' a sight I never thought I'd live to see,' continues Peggy. 'I seen the blessed angels in the lane! They're heavenly crathurs. One of them has rosy cheeks —— Oh, my goodness, here they are! Bill, run, run ; don't wait for your coat, or they'll be gone. Look at the shoes and stockings, like my poor gran used to wear. Lord rest her soul! They're askin' for Granny Mac. Look! did you *ever* see the likes of them, beyant England?'

—— "'They're grand women, no doubt, Mrs. Malone,' says Nancy, in calmer response to her friend's excited outburst.

"One day as we passed through a famous locality in our rounds, a scavenger was taken up 'body and bones' and carried off several yards by a stout woman assisted by others of her sex. The poor man had incurred popular displeasure because he had not with sufficient celerity 'cleared the way for the blessed angels;' and he was not discharged without being threatened with a bath in his own cart, if he did not show us more respect in future. If a thoughtless youth passed us without taking his pipe from his mouth he was certain to 'catch it' from some of our friends ; and a juvenile whistler incurred the same danger.

"To hear the simple folks describe a patient's symptoms, the doctor's visit, his inquires, his stethescope, &c., was sometimes 'as good as a play.' The sisters who were on the sick mission one day entered a small room, and asked how was the poor woman whom they had come to visit.

"'Oh, then, sure,' broke forth her daughter, 'I may thank God and His blessed Mother in heaven, that my mother is alive to-day! Oh, my heart's in my bosom since the last day you and the other lady was here. Dr. P—— (I knew his father and his mother very well; may the Lord have mercy on their souls!), he brought two other doctors wid him, an' they came into the cabin, as I may call it, an' after talkin' to themselves, they felt her pult, an' made her put out her tongue, that never toult a lie; an' they blew the *thrumpet* over her. When Johnny there seen her tongue out, he let a roar, which the neighbours heard. They all came in to see us. They thought my mother was dead! The doctor says it's the yallow jaundice my mother has; but Mrs. O'Flaherty says it's the windy dropsy an' pleurisy. But, ma'am, I'll leave her in the hands of God, an' poor Father K—— an' yourselves.'

"It was all in vain that we advocated the doctor's cause; Mrs. O'Flaherty inspired more confidence than the faculty; however, we must add that the poor woman, whose case created such a sensation, recovered, and lived many years, for the comfort and edification, let us hope, of her dutiful daughter, and Johnny, and Mrs. O'Flaherty, and the neighbours in the lane."

No doubt the visitation of the sick-poor, especially in remote country districts and in the worst parts of a densely-populated town, brought the nuns occasionally into contact with a greater amount of ignorance and consequent supineness than they were prepared for. However, it seldom indeed happened, even in the worst cases, that their words of instruction fell on wholly barren ground, or were received without gratitude. It was not often that they got such an answer in the course of a catechetical instruction as that given by a man, who when asked, "Who died for our sins?" replied, "Who else, ma'am, I'm sure, but the great St. Patrick; long life to him!" Nor did they meet a match for the poor woman, who, on displaying an unusual amount of ignorance, and being asked where she had been instructed, said to the nun, "Musha, then, I never was instructed. My father died a year before I was born, and I never had a mother."

Many an instance might be cited in which the Sisters of Charity felt that they were the parties taught and edified, rather than the poor sufferers, whose sublime faith and generous conformity found expression in artless yet striking language. Somehow the pious poor seemed to have a way of their own of saying things, so that their words were as good as a sermon, and far surer to be remembered.

A poor woman came one bitter frosty day to St. Martin's dispensary for relief. She was barefoot, and the sister expressed compassion for her miserable condition. "Well, indeed, ma'am," said the poor woman, coming closer to the nun, and speaking confidentially, "I was thinking of the time when I could walk the roads in my own shoes

and stockings. But sure, then, the thought came into my mind that I never saw a picture of my Lord and His blessed Mother but what they wor barefoot."

Another poor woman, whose foot had been crushed by the falling on it of an iron bar, seemed quite surprised when the sister, who was consoling her, urged the duty of resignation. She wondered how anyone could doubt her conformity for a moment. "Why, ma'am," she said, "the will of my God is as welcome to me as the bud on the bush."

Perhaps nothing is more striking and affecting than the way in which the poor Irish meet death; and many were the instances of the Christian's faith and love transforming the "King of Terrors" into a strong-winged angel of deliverance and joy, which the Sisters of Charity met with in their visits to the lowly dwellings of the poor. Early one morning a small donation was brought to a convent as an alms for the destitute from a poor man who was thought to be dying, and who wished to see the nuns. The sisters set out and found a "real Irish holy soul" full of faith, and hope, and love, most anxious to go home and see "one sight of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph." "Sure all my friends are there," said he, while his face grew radiant as he murmured the words, "and won't they give me, avourneen, the *dhe veha!* (the welcome). I'm wearing the robe (scapular) of Mary, the Mother of God, upwards of threescore years, and sure the blessed saints know all that Jesus did for my poor soul on Mount Calvary." The poor fellow did not go home that time. He survived for several years; and in order that no one should have any trouble when he died, he got his grave ready, and put up in the churchyard a headstone, with a vacant space for the date of his decease to be cut on, when he should have expired. To this, his last earthly tenement, he used to pay many visits, strewing grass seed over the surface to increase the verdure of the sod.

Another poor man, who had received the last sacraments, was asked by a sister whether he was now quite happy and ready—with his mind at peace? "See now, ma'am," he replied, in all simplicity, "I'm as happy as if I was going to a wedding."

The resignation even of the young when death comes to separate them from all they love, is often inexpressively touching. Once the sisters were called to attend a young man who was dangerously ill. He was about twenty-two years of age, had an affectionate wife and a fine boy, and yet was ready to give up these dear ones and his own life when God required the sacrifice. "Sure it's all I have to give my God," he said; "and didn't His Son do more than that for me?" And when a sister was speaking to him of God's great promises, he said, "Ah, ma'am, nothing gives a body such comfort as the word of God: praises to His holy name!" Another time, being reminded of the

resignation with which all earthly ties should be broken when death warns us, he replied, "Yes, agrah; it is but little after all. I am willing to go if God likes. Welcome be to His holy will. It must be done. Glory be to Him!"

In a word, so many instances of heavenly conformity to the will of God on the part of the suffering poor, and so many happy deaths came under the observation of the sisters, that they could not help thinking that singular graces and blessings in the last hours of life are a part of the hundred-fold given to those who have followed their Lord in the road of suffering and privation. It seemed as if their simple, chastened souls reached heaven even before death had chilled their clay.

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## IX.

### STANHOPE-STREET.

ON the 2nd of February, 1869, the Stanhope-street convent celebrated its jubilee: for that day, the Feast of the Purification, was the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. High Mass was celebrated on the happy occasion, and an eloquent discourse pronounced by the Cardinal Archbishop's secretary, the Very Rev. Dr. Conroy (afterwards Bishop of Ardagh). In conclusion, the preacher feelingly recalled the memory of the foundress and her sisters, who, having fulfilled their task in life, suffering and weeping with the poor and afflicted whom they relieved and comforted, had gone up to the heavenly mansions, bearing their sheaves with joy, and were now celebrating their eternal jubilee in heaven. The mother-general and all the elder members of the Dublin houses took part in the joyous celebration of the day, and from the country houses came letters of congratulation and tokens of sympathetic feeling. The convent and the institution were decorated with banners and emblematic devices, and when the religious functions were brought to a conclusion, there was a great feast for the children in the dining-hall, the sisters serving and contributing to the enjoyment of all. Fifty poor women were also provided with dinner and an alms, as an offering of thanksgiving to God.

For a long time it had been the ardent wish of all interested in the establishment, that a commodious well-ventilated chapel should be erected for the accommodation of the community and the children, who all suffered much from the restricted space and stifling atmosphere of the little sanctuary, which suited the requirements of an earlier period, but not those of a vastly enlarged institution. There seemed but little

hope of seeing this very reasonable desire gratified—the mother-general being unwilling to allow the institution to be involved in a heavy debt—until the brother of the rectress, Mr. John Sweetman of Raheny, offered the munificent contribution of £1,000 towards the erection of an edifice to be dedicated under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, and called the Church of the Purification. With this encouragement, the work was commenced, by the laying of the first stone on the feast of St. Augustine, August 28, 1870. The Bishop of Cape Town, Dr. Grimley, and a great number of friends, both lay and clerical, took part in the day's proceedings, and it was announced that more than £700 had been already received in subscriptions, over and above the munificent offering of £1,000.

As the work progressed, the necessary funds were supplied by the generosity of the public, and many costly gifts were presented by friends. Mrs. Clarke of Blackrock, near Dublin, ordered, in memory of her deceased husband, the handsome altar of the Blessed Virgin, the wheel window of stained glass surmounting it, and the statue of Our Lady. On the very day that this altar was blessed, the gentleman already mentioned, Mr. Sweetman, announced that he would take to himself the honour of erecting the altar and statue of the Sacred Heart, with a suitable window of stained glass. The same benefactor also presented the church with a set of elegantly designed gasaliers; and Mrs. John Sweetman of Merrion-square, who not in this instance alone was a benefactor to Stanhope-street, put up the beautiful window over the high altar. By-and-by a silver lamp was hung before the tabernacle, and this had been purchased by the subscriptions of former pupils of the institution, collected literally in every part of the world. For the first time, the holy sacrifice was offered in the new church on the Feast of the Purification, 1873, but it was not until a few years later that the beautiful church, a perfect work from the tiled floor to the high-pitched roof, stood in all its completeness within the convent grounds.

While the building of the church was going on, the institution lost three of its greatest friends and benefactors. The first of these was Mrs. John O'Brien, the founder, we may say, of the Stanhope-street House of Refuge, or, as it is now called, St. Mary's Industrial Training School. Mrs. O'Brien had reached the venerable age of eighty-six years, when she died on the 28th of March, 1871. During the last two years of her life her clear intellect became somewhat impaired, but her mind when it wandered revisited the old scenes. She would often order her carriage, and want to get ready to attend the committee meetings at the Refuge; and when she was able to go out, and the servant would ask where he was to drive to, she was sure to say, "to Stanhope-street." "Our community," say the Annals of the convent of the Purification, "look upon it as a particular interposition

of Divine Providence that it fell to the lot of the sisters of this house to attend our dear friend and benefactress during her last days on earth, and that by special permission we were allowed to remain with her during the last three days of her holy life. We had the honour to receive her last sigh, and the comfort to close her eyes and arrange her holy remains in the habit of a Dominican of the third order, to which she belonged for many years. R.I.P. Her great and generous acts must have soon obtained for her the vision of God; but our deep feelings of gratitude to our first and greatest benefactress could not be satisfied without a monthly Mass, which is said regularly in our convent chapel for her eternal repose."

In the Rev. Father Seaver, of the Society of Jesus, who died on the 26th of February, 1872, the institution suffered an irreparable loss. During six years he had been chaplain to the institution and confessor to the children. No labour was too great for Father Seaver to undertake, if he could thereby advance in any degree either the spiritual progress or the temporal interests of the pupils in the Training School. But most of all was he devoted to the Sodality of the Children of Mary attached to the institution. His heart lay in that work, and well did the little band respond to his fatherly supervision and affection. Many of them entered religious communities, and many, living in the world, were an example of fervent piety and solid virtue. Shortly before his death this holy priest and inestimable friend offered the holy Sacrifice in the new church, and was in delight with its architectural beauty. He seemed to take greatly to heart some obstruction which had occurred in the carrying on of the works, and having inquired into the details of the matter at issue, he said he should certainly do something to help his friends out of their difficulty. Before a week was over Father Seaver was no more. But shortly after, in a very unexpected way, all difficulties were removed, and the nuns had no doubt that the kind-hearted and zealous friend had been as good as his word, and had sent them help from heaven.

Father Seaver died a victim of charity. One night he was called up to visit a poor woman dying of smallpox. He made no delay, but ran off at once to the wretched cellar indicated, having omitted (as he wished to say Mass the next morning) taking the usual nourishment to prevent the effects of contagion. In the cellar he found a mother and three daughters dying of the terrible disease, which was then raging in Dublin; he went from one bed to another; heard the confession of the patients, and prepared them for death with all his characteristic fervour and piety; and having remained a long time in the infected room, caught the contagion. No sooner had he returned to the house when he became sick, and said to the brother who attended him that he was fatally stricken with smallpox. On hearing from his confessor the night before he died that there was no hope of his

recovery, he exclaimed : "Thanks be to God; I am the happiest man living." Having asked for his desk, he took out of it an envelope, within which he had put some money he had collected for St. Mary's Training School, and directed the packet with his own hand to the rectress. This was his last act.

The third great friend who died within that short interval was Dr. Shea, who for more than twenty years was the medical attendant of the community and of the children of Stanhope-street. "He was more like a father than a doctor," say the Annals of the institution. "He was always ready to attend when needed; he would sit at the bedside of a poor little child to watch the effect of the remedies; and though not demonstrative in words, he was just as solicitous for the sisters and for the youngest child in the house, as if they were his richest patients, leaving nothing undone that skill and care could devise. It is needless to say that his fees were very trifling; he merely accepted whatever was offered to him at the end of the year, and frequently refused the customary consultation fee, or if he now and then accepted it, he did so apparently that Mother-rectress might have no difficulty in asking his medical services. His kind heart appeared to feel the wants of some of his poor little patients, and he often wished that various helps could be procured for them, which our poverty had to refuse, especially on several occasions during the prevalence of smallpox and other epidemics, when he required the children to be sent to the country. Mother-rectress would remonstrate, and say, "But, doctor, we cannot afford it; and this child is an orphan, and has no one who could procure her the advantage you desire." "Well," the good doctor would reply, "her life is as precious in my sight as the Queen of England's, and nothing must be spared to save life." Of course the lodgings were taken, and the children carried to the country. One day, when he thought he was tiring Mother-rectress, he said, "Well, when I am gone you shall have a house of your own in the country, which I, as a medical man, consider necessary for the community and the children of the institution, that the delicate members may have the benefit of change of air." From the confident way in which he spoke of our having a house in the country, Mother-rectress thought he intended to leave to the institution some house of his own. Another thing that pressed on his kindly feeling was the laborious efforts of the sisters to support the institution which he daily witnessed. He often asked what were its resources, and seemed astonished how it stood and worked so well without Government assistance or funded property.

The good doctor continued to his last illness practising the profession which he dearly loved, and labouring among the poor, to whom he often took wine and nourishment as well as medicine. On the 19th of May, 1875, he died, leaving a very handsome legacy to St. Mary's, Stanhope-street.

Among the benefactors of the Stanhope-street institution should also be specially named Miss Dowell, and Messrs. John O'Brien, Richard O'Gorman, and Charles Egan.

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## X.

### THE FIRST JUBILARIAN.

THE First jubilarian of the congregation was Sister Mary Joseph O'Reilly, who, on the 15th of October, 1869, reached the fiftieth anniversary of her religious profession. For many years she had been a member of the Gardiner-street community; and a much younger sister who had known her in that house, when asked what her recollections were of this venerable Sister of Charity, gave the following reply :—

"Sister Mary Joseph was too far advanced in old age when I lived with her for me to understand what she really had been; but to me she always seemed the type of real, *real* humility. She was the most truly humble soul I ever came across. She spent nearly fifty years brushing her cloak and blacking her shoes every day, paddling up and down the same dirty lanes, climbing the same old staircases and ladders, pounding the principal mysteries of religion into heads, all wonderfully the same in their dullness and ignorance. She never had the excitement of success or of great interest in her career; her life of labour was always obscure and unpretending. Slow she was and very scrupulous; but her scruples had the rare quality of leading her to humble and make little of herself. I wish there were many Sister Mary Joseph's in the congregation, for then indeed we might expect a wonderful blessing to be poured down on its labours."

Such being Sister Mary Joseph's characteristics, it was not to be expected that she would look forward to the celebration of her jubilee except with sincere desire to escape the honours in store for her. Notwithstanding the many warnings she got from the younger members of the community that she should not be so shabby as to die, or to cheat them in any other way out of the festival, when the eventful day drew near she made sundry attempts to evade the threatened distinctions, until, having understood that it was the mother-general's desire that the first jubilee of a Sister of Charity should be celebrated in the manner usual with other communities, she acquiesced with child-like simplicity. While Sister Mary Joseph was in retreat during the three days preceding the anniversary, preparations were going on for the celebration. The chapel was tastefully adorned; the refectory was hung with wreaths and garlands, and decorated with banners bearing scriptural devices; and all was made to wear a festal appearance.

On the morning of the 15th the jubilarian renewed her vows aloud at the communion of the Mass; but the ceremonial for a jubilee which is usually gone through at the end of Mass was postponed until Benediction in order to give time for the arrival of the mothers and sisters who were invited for the occasion from the other houses. At one o'clock she was led into the chapel, in the centre of which a seat and a *prie-dieu* had been prepared for her, the rectress being on her right hand, and Mother Mary Patrick Ennis, the oldest of the congregation in Dublin, on her left; while two poor children took charge of her crown and staff until they should be blessed by the celebrant, and presented to her. These accompanied her when, after an appropriate exhortation had been given by Father Edward Kelly, S.J., she approached the altar rail holding in her hand an ornamented wax candle lighted. The Psalm 99—*Sing joyfully to God all the earth; serve ye the Lord with gladness,* was then intoned; verses and responses were chanted, and prayers pronounced over the jubilarian; the crown of flowers was blessed and placed on her head, while the priest besought Almighty God that she might deserve to obtain a crown of glory in heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord, who to obtain for His faithful servants a crown of eternal blessedness had given His most holy body to be wounded with a crown of thorns. A staff was likewise blessed and given to her to be the support of her age and the symbol of her pilgrimage. Other psalms having been sung, and beautiful prayers recited, the celebrant pronounced over the jubilarian the following blessing:—

"May the Lord your God bless you and keep you from all evil both of guilt and of punishment, of body and soul; may He give unto you increase of merit and perseverance unto the end.—Amen. May the Lord show unto you the light of His countenance and have mercy upon you. May the Almighty God bless you with the full privileges of a sacred jubilee and with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things. May the Lord turn the light of His countenance upon you and grant unto you grace here, and hereafter the peace of eternity, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The jubilarian was then led back to her seat, Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament was given, and the ceremonial ended with the singing of the *Te Deum.*

On the following Sunday (the 17th) a dinner was served to fifty poor men and women in the infant school of the convent. Sister Mary Joseph with her staff and crown came to see and to be seen by the guests. She was greeted enthusiastically, and ample justice was done to the good cheer provided in her honour. The missioners, and all the sisters who had to do with the poor, got additional money to give in alms; and thus while many a fervent blessing and prayer

went up to heaven for "Mrs. O'Reilly," many a humble home took its part in the celebration of her jubilee.

Later, by a few years, the jubilees were celebrated of Mrs. Ennis and Mrs. Coleman, who, it will be remembered, having been friends in the world, entered the noviceship together, and were early in their career advanced to positions of great trust and importance in the congregation. On the occasion of Mrs. Ennis's *fête*, extraordinary honour was paid to her; and the Very Rev. Dr. Russell, the venerable friend of the foundress of the congregation, pronounced an eloquent discourse at the religious ceremony. Mrs. Coleman's jubilee was an event in the city of Cork and the surrounding country where her name had been spread abroad during the cholera and famine years. Numbers of people came into the city to offer their congratulations to the beloved jubilarian, and the number of Masses offered for her showed the respect in which she was held by the clergy.

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## XI.

### OUR LADY OF ANGELS, CLONMEL.

HE Convent of Our Lady of Angels, Clonmel, made satisfactory progress as years went on. Dr. Burke, parish priest and vicar-general, was a true and helpful friend; and the people of the town and neighbourhood showed by their many acts of kindness how much they sympathised in the good works the nuns were carrying on. Through the liberality of the people, the sisters have been enabled to relieve the sick-poor at all seasons, and to enlarge the schools as occasion required. One difficulty they never had to contend with in their schools or their orphanage, namely, stupidity on the part of the pupils. The Tipperary children gave little trouble in this respect. The nuns found them uncommonly quick, and easily managed, but of so vivacious a temperament that they had to be kept constantly occupied. When left without employment they were apt to turn what knowledge they possessed to account in holding discourses and carrying on disputations with one another.

To these bright spirits scholastic exercises were only a pleasure, and for them the prospect of a public examination had no terrors. The little faces would light up at the announcement that in two months' time there was to be a grand examination, and they should exert themselves to do credit to their teachers. When the eventful day arrived they would come in their Sunday clothes to do honour to

the occasion, and answer bravely before the assembled priests and secular visitors. An agreeable variety was usually imparted to these exercises. Sometimes, after answering in the catechism and going through an examination in spelling, grammar, and geography, the children would recite a piece of poetry entitled "The Birds," each child representing one of the feathered tribe and describing what she saw in her flight round the world. At other times there would be an examination in Irish history, followed by a scene in which universal history would be dealt with: a certain number of the children representing the angels of each country, and advocating its cause in the "Angel's poetry," each bearing a crown of flowers emblematic of the country which she represented—a crown of thorns interwoven with shamrocks for Ireland, a coronet of roses for England, and so on with the rest. A distribution of premiums always closed the academia, while, moreover, the best answerer in the catechism, the child most regular in attendance, and the one most remarkable for good conduct, returned from the scene in triumph with a wreath of red roses, a laurel star-spangled crown, or a beautiful golden diadem to hang up as a trophy in the Tipperary peasant's home.[1]

Soon after their establishment in Clonmel, the nuns got up a crib to aid the Christmas devotions; and this picturesque and pious representation of the stable at Bethlehem with its occupants—the Infant Jesus, the Virgin Mother, and St. Joseph, while the ox and the ass stood nigh, and the shepherds hurried in to pay their homage to the new-born Saviour, being altogether new to the people attracted many visitors. After some time figures of great size and beauty were procured; the fame of the crib spread all over Tipperary; and every year the number of visitors increased, until at last the people of the surrounding country undertook, as a matter of course, during the Christmas holidays, a pilgrimage to the convent at Clonmel. Men, women, and children journeyed from the mountains, and the nuns took advantage of the favourable opportunities afforded by

[1] Not long ago a party of tourists passing through the county of Tipperary were anxious to ascertain whether the Cromwellians, who had been so thickly planted in the county, had left even in their names any considerable trace of their former predominance. Having gone to the convent of the Sisters of Charity in Clonmel, the travellers were introduced to the schools, where they saw three or four hundred children, varying greatly in features and complexion, but on the whole good-looking and remarkably bright-eyed. The question of the names was then referred to, and the nuns produced the school-rolls, on which were found some names of dubious origin, but none that could be classed as distinctly Cromwellian. The Strongbownian and Anglo-Norman element made a fair show in the Cantwells, Prendergasts, Burkes, Aylwards, Roches; but the Milesian and old Irish carried the day. There were O'Neills, O'Donnells, and O'Briens in plenty; Morrisseys, Murphys, O'Driscolls, and O'Hallorans abounded; a sprinkling of Maguires, Lallys, Ahernes, and Connors, varied the array; and there were Ryans and Dwyers—enough to remind one of Lord Norbury's grim facetiousness when crying out, as he took his seat on the judicial bench: "Now Ryans and Dwyers, to the bar!"

the advent of these pilgrim parties to give a few words of religious instruction and friendly advice to the simple mountaineers.

One bitter frosty day there arrived at the convent door three old women who had walked twelve miles to see the crib. Great was their grief and disappointment on being informed that they were too late—that the crib had been taken down the previous day. They wept like children, and exhibited such distress that some of the figures were carried down to them. Their admiration and delight were unbounded. They wept anew, and prayed aloud in Irish. To assist in consoling them they were presented with *Agnus Dei* and other pious objects, and were refreshed with tea and bread and butter after their twelve miles' journey on foot. On leaving for their distant home they bestowed fervent blessings on the Sisters of Charity, and made up their mind that no matter what occurred they should never again be too late for the crib.

To none perhaps is the pilgrimage to the crib so great a delight as to the workhouse children, who on the invitation of the nuns are brought at Christmas time to the convent under the escort of their teachers. As the procession passes through the town the people show a great interest in the proceedings, and never fail to pour out blessings on the Sisters of Charity for their kindness to the poor children. The latter enjoy themselves exceedingly, not only in viewing the crib, but in singing their hymns and in partaking of the feast prepared for them. In fact this visit forms the subject of their thoughts and conversation for months previous to the event, and for months after it has taken place.

In the autumn of 1864, the Vincentian Fathers gave a mission in the parish church of SS. Peter and Paul, with the greatest possible success. The Sisters of Charity had a share in the good work, for numerous adults were daily sent in to the convent to receive instruction, and as most of them came from a great distance they had to be attended to at such hours as best suited their convenience. While the exercises of the mission were still going on Sister Mary Columbkill Mangan departed this life. It was the first death that had occurred in the community since the establishment of the convent nineteen years before, and it made a great impression, the more so as Sister Mary Columbkill was very young in the religious life, and was held in great respect and affection by the people of the town and neighbourhood. The priests would themselves, to the exclusion of all others, carry her remains from the convent to the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, where crowds of all classes attended the office and High Mass previous to the interment, the Vincentian Fathers likewise taking a part in the solemn functions.

About two years later the community lost their inestimable friend, the vicar-general, Dr. Burke, after a protracted illness. The rectress

and the sister on the sick mission had the consolation of being present at his peaceful and beautiful death. He expired as the final word of the last absolution was being pronounced, and just at the moment when the mid-day Angelus bell began to toll. This bell had been swung aloft by the good pastor himself, and at its call thrice daily the faithful flock had bent the knee in homage to the Incarnate Word. There is a saying among the pious, that when one breathes his last as the Angelus is ringing the angels come and carry his soul to heaven. Any how, it seems a happy moment for the spirit to go forth while Christian hearts are hushed in prayer. Dr. Burke bequeathed a considerable sum for the benefit of the schools of the Sisters of Charity; and as a mark of special regard for the superior, he left to the convent a house and premises which he had purchased with the intention of thus bestowing.

A small garden belonging to this house was indeed a God-send to the nuns: part of it they enclosed as a cemetery and the rest served for exercise. All through the previous twenty-one years they had had no spot of ground in which they might breathe the air except a yard which served as a playground for the school children. Nevertheless the garden does not adjoin the convent, and the nuns have to traverse a lane in order to reach it.

The Clonmel community although dwelling in the midst of a beautiful country—the "Vale of Honey"—are more restricted as to space, and less healthily situated than any other house of the congregation. Their chapel is still a mere oratory in the dwelling-house, inconveniently situated and miserably small.

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## XII.

### THE PENITENT'S HOME.

HOUGH more withdrawn from public observation than most of the institutions under the care of the Sisters of Charity, the work of the Penitents' Asylum at Donnybrook was perhaps in some respects the most onerous and difficult of all. It needed unusual tact and prudence to carry on the daily routine of labour and to maintain order in an establishment whose inmates, varying in age and circumstances as well as in character, were as a rule naturally wayward, and not unfrequently turbulent. Rude, ignorant women, not unacquainted with prison life, came to the asylum beseeching shelter and a chance of salvation; perhaps they stayed a week or a month, and then departed, unable to support the tedium of a regular life, and craving for the

wild liberty that had been their destruction; or more probably, they settled down and found an outlet for their energy in toilsome manual work and fierce battling with temptations; and, doing violence to heaven and to themselves, persevered to the end and won the crown. Gentle natures came too, and not only gained peace for themselves through penance, but exercised a good influence on others by their advice and example.

One poor soul lived for forty years in the asylum. So kind and helpful was she to every living creature that the birds knew her, and her appearance in the bleaching-green caused a commotion among the sparrows and robins. They came and fed out of her hand, and seemed always ready for the crumbs she drew forth from the depth of her pocket. Another, who had entered at the age of eighteen to please her mother, and with the intention of remaining only for six months, never left the home she had found at St. Mary's, and died there after forty-two years of a penitential and edifying life. She was very zealous in instructing the ignorant young penitents, teaching them the catechism, preparing them for the sacraments, and inducing them to persevere. And there was yet another who spent nearly half a century in the asylum, giving an example all that time of humble, unostentatious virtue, practical faith, sweet patience, and simple obedience. The priest who attended her during her last illness considered it a privilege to go up to see her and say prayers by her bedside. As she breathed her last, the nuns and all the penitents were round her bed reciting the recommendation of a departing soul, and many recommended themselves at the same time to Mary's prayers, for there was but one opinion regarding her—that she lived and died a sincere penitent and a faithful servant of God. Indeed a long list might be given of those who entered as penitents and died as saints. Happy deaths are the rule in that house.

Most of all touching were the cases of young creatures brought to the asylum by a broken-hearted father or mother, or coming of their own accord to implore the nuns to take them in. A poor girl, hardly more than a child in appearance, was brought by her father who, a small farmer and a widower, was striving to rear five young children to whom this, his eldest girl Mary, was like a mother, so thrifty was she in her ways, and so sedate in her manners. The poor father was thunderstruck when his little treasure was charged with misconduct. She was only fourteen years of age when he brought her to the nuns, and, having left her with them, returned home with a breaking heart. Sad it was to see the child-like figure in the dress of a penitent. One of the most trustworthy of the older inmates got the charge of the poor child, and well and affectionately did she fulfil the trust; teaching her many things which afterwards rendered her very useful, and doing the utmost to keep her from forming acquaintance

with persons in the house whose conversation might be injurious to one so young. Her father came to see her at intervals; she looked forward to his visits with the greatest eagerness; saved up her premium money and had little presents ready when he arrived, and enjoyed his delight when he heard she had made this pin-cushion for Biddy, and that needle-case for Ellen. Then she would inquire minutely into all the household details, and the farmer would talk in the most serious way to her about the produce of the potato crop, the price of oats, and so on. He had promised to take her home after six years, and the hope of returning supported her. At length, her father having failed to come at the usual time, she fretted very much, and in her sorrow divined the cause—"My father has gone to get married," she said, in confidence to her faithful guardian, the elder penitent. And so it turned out to be. After a while he came and told her of his marriage. She cried bitterly and was like one broken-hearted. Her spirits never recovered this blow. She soon afterwards fell into consumption, and having suffered most patiently died a holy death.

Another young and very interesting penitent was a certain little Ellie, who likewise "in a short space fulfilled a long time." One day in spring she presented herself at the gate-lodge. The porteress, not suspecting the visitor's errand, went up to the convent to say that a young lady wanted to see one of the nuns, but would neither tell her business nor come up to the convent. The sister-ministress was occupied at that moment, and it was some time before she was at leisure to go down to the porch to learn what the case might be. Arriving there she saw the gardener's children playing about, while in the midst of them was a stranger, who appeared to be the soul of the innocent unthinking party, and as it were the "prime manager of mirth" among them all. She was small, unusually pretty, neatly and even elegantly dressed.

This was little Ellie, the spoiled child of doting parents, whom giddiness and vanity had led into bad company, and thence into evil ways. She told her short, sad tale, made no objection when the most difficult things of the penitent's life were proposed to her, and was received into the asylum. Soon, however, she grew restless and discontented, and wanted to leave. The nuns sent for her father, and he being a sensible, as well as an affectionate parent, entered into their views, and obliged Ellie to promise to stay in the asylum for one year, at the expiration of which time he said he would, if he heard a good account of her, come and take her home. Still she continued to be troublesome enough until, after some months, she and two others were formed into a little class, to prepare for their first communion. On Christmas morning she received the Bread of Life for the first time, and became immediately a changed being. The improvement

in poor little Ellie was visible to all, and was well expressed by one of the old penitents, who, on being asked how Ellie was going on, exclaimed, "Oh, praised for ever be our sweet Saviour in the Holy Sacrament! since the child was at the altar, she is a pattern to the house."

Her parents occasionally came to see her, but there was no longer any urging of them to take her home. A dread of the world seemed the predominant feeling in her heart, and this was still further increased by the account that reached her of the sudden and terrible death of a former companion, who was killed by the overturning of a coach in which she was returning home from a race-course. This was the girl who had led Ellie into bad company. "To think," exclaimed the latter, "that she was killed dead on the road and that I was taken into God's own house!"

Ellie had never been robust in health, and before long she fell into consumption. The news that she was in a dangerous state had no terrors for her; she was wishing that she might die young, and through God's mercy go to heaven. Her mother came, and Ellie calmed her noisy grief, and begged that her father and her little brother might be sent to see her soon. They came while she was still able to creep down stairs. She spoke calmly and beautifully to them, and when the scene was just getting too much for the poor father, she asked his blessing and forgiveness once more, kissed him and her little brother, and making a sign to the sister-ministress, who was present, to speak to her father, went back to the asylum. When she had gone the father grasped the sister's hand, which was held out to him, and said, "May God bless you for all you have done for my child: I never loved her as I do now. I see heaven in her face."

In a short time the poor girl was unable to leave her bed. Prayer was her only delight; all who came to her should say a little prayer; and as everyone was anxious to see her, she got a great many prayers in the course of the day. Early in the month of June she died happily, having been one year and two months in St. Mary's. The rectress felt much for the poor father, and directed that he should receive notice when the final change took place, and be permitted to attend the funeral, which sad consolation he considered a great privilege. Immediately on her death the gardener was sent to acquaint him with it and to inform him of the time appointed for the funeral. The messenger found that the poor man was very ill, and had received the last sacraments.

The morning after Ellie had been laid in her last resting-place in the penitent's cemetery, a little note was left at the convent, asking prayers "for the repose of the soul of N. N., father of Ellie, who died lately in the asylum."

During more than thirty long years the asylum and the community

of St. Mary's were governed by Mother Mary Elizabeth Knaresborough as rectress, assisted by Sister Mary Bonaventure Coyne as ministress. They entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity within four years of one another. Sister Elizabeth was sent to the asylum soon after her profession, and Sister Mary Bonaventure spent some time there, even during her noviceship. Side by side they laboured in this arduous field of work during the years of their religious life, until the day came when it pleased the Master of the vineyard to call them together to receive their reward.

Miss Catherine Knaresborough lost her mother while she was still very young, and was brought up, together with her sisters, by an aunt, whose care and affection she always remembered with gratitude. Her character was affectionate, and her friendships were lasting. She was much attached to a young lady whose destiny led her to Australia, and thither Miss Knaresborough, in spite of the remonstrances of friends, resolved on accompanying her. Her preparations were made, her outfit was procured, and she was on the eve of departure, when, in the most unexpected manner, it was said to her by one whose words were entitled to more than ordinary respect, "It would be much fitter for you to stay at home and become a Sister of Charity." A light dawned on her; she seriously considered whether this might not be what God required of her; prayed much; and, finally, having given up her romantic scheme, offered herself to Mrs. Aikenhead. She was accepted. Her handsome outfit, consisting chiefly of uncut pieces of silk and linen, was devoted to the use of the altar; and she became in due course an eminently useful as well as a very holy Sister of Charity.

In the asylum Mother Mary Elizabeth displayed great energy of character, a natural capacity for business, and practical talents of the first order. Under her superintendence the institution was soon worked up to a state of admirable efficiency. A strong sense of duty seemed to be the most prominent feature of her character. No matter how difficult the command of her superiors, no matter how repugnant to her feelings or opposed to her own views might be the line of conduct marked out for her, once she heard the decision of superiors she gave her entire prompt attention to having it carried out, and this not only in important matters, but even in trivial things. In her government of the penitents she was strict, and very exact with regard to regularity and industry; also endeavouring earnestly to maintain a spirit of charity among them. Insight and penetration she possessed in a remarkable degree. None knew better than she did how to uphold authority, and yet none could, with more dignity, refrain from using authority when the exercise of it seemed likely to do harm rather than good.

On one occasion, while bringing visitors through the asylum, Mrs.

Knaresborough noticed one of the penitents wearing her cap back on her head, and calling the woman, told her she required the penitents to wear their caps modestly down on the forehead; putting up her hand at the same time, she brought the cap forward, and asked the woman her name, for at that time delicate health prevented the rectress being much out in the asylum, and she did not know by appearance many of the penitents who had lately entered. The woman made no answer, but drew away hastily, and in a passion pulled off the cap, threw it on the floor, and dashed out of the room. It was, indeed, a humiliation for the mother, and all the penitents in the room were petrified with astonishment. On inquiring into the character of this person, Mrs. Knaresborough learned that although good in the main and a sincere penitent, she was a decided oddity, and had daily to combat a fearful temper, which she generally conquered, though it had escaped her on the occasion in question. Repentance soon followed the outburst; the poor creature expressed her contrition and her willingness to undergo any punishment that might be laid upon her, and on a fitting opportunity Mrs. Knaresborough's forgiveness was besought. The answer of the rectress was to the effect that as it was a *personal* insult she received, acting as a religious superior, she forgave it; and that this being so, it would be inconsistent to punish; but should she hear of anyone presuming to reproach the poor woman for the fault of inadvertence, which the superior had forgiven, she would not let the matter pass so easily. The poor faulty one, however, asked leave to make a public apology, and did so with sincere sorrow. This little scene made an impression on the penitents, and some of them, when afterwards referring to the incident, said, "We were all watching Mrs. Knaresborough, to see what she would do, and the noble lady was above taking offence at the foolish conduct of an ignorant creature."

Sister Mary Bonaventure Coyne, the ministress, was all sweetness and self-immolation, the *refugium peccatorum*, ever ready to console the troubled, to raise the fallen, to cheer the timid, and to share the joy or sorrow of each and all. She had been the same in her own family, where father, mother, and brothers looked up to her as their guide and comforter, their support in every difficulty. She had a wonderful talent for gaining an influence over the penitents; none but the most obdurate could resist her; there was something in her kind generous manner which insensibly touched the heart. Their love and reverence for her were very great, and few were so hardened as to persevere in any course which they knew would fret or annoy Mrs. Coyne.

One day she heard a great commotion in the laundry, and on going down to ascertain the cause, she found a number of the women wrangling about some work that had come in, each protesting she

would not do it, and all in such a state of excitement as to be almost ready to fall to blows. Mrs. Coyne was shocked, and astonished them by desiring all to go away and leave the clothes there, adding: 'I would not have the great God offended for *any* amount of work." The women did as they were desired and left the laundry; but as soon as Mrs. Coyne had gone elsewhere they returned, set to the work in a body, and had it done in peace and good humour before she again appeared on the scene.

Mrs. Knaresborough suffering much from ill health, her duties were often added to those of the sister-ministress, who nevertheless contrived to get with ease through an amount of work which would have been simply overpowering to anyone else. It was remarked, too, that in almost everything she did the cross was visible; she was continually meeting with disappointments; every request she made was certain to be at first denied, although perhaps after some time it might be granted: in fact it seemed only necessary for her to ask anything, in order to be refused. But prayer was her refuge and her consolation. She once said to a sister that three minutes in presence of the Blessed Sacrament would reconcile her to anything; and at another time, when speaking of the difficulties some felt in meditating, she said: "I am not worthy to be tried in that way. I never yet felt any difficulty in making my prayer; on the contrary, if I go to the chapel never so weary, I at once feel quite refreshed."

During Mrs. Knaresborough's last illness she could not bear the sister ministeress to be out of her sight. The devotion of the latter was extraordinary, and in truth she fell a victim to her charity, for her health gave way in the course of her long attendance in the sick-room. On the 11th of May, the death of the mother-rectress being imminent, Mrs. Coyne took special care that the mortuary chapel should be prepared for the mother's remains; and in the evening she went out to the garden to give directions about a rockery at the end of one of the walks leading to the cemetery, which she wished to have surmounted by a statue of St. Joseph, that he might, as she said, be smiling on the mother as she passed. That very night she herself became ill. Next day the doctor pronounced her to be in the greatest danger, she received the last sacraments with the utmost devotion, and then in peace awaited the final summons. "Oh, I am so happy!" she whispered, "I have not a single thing on my mind!"

For several days she lingered, preserving her usual cheerfulness, her thoughtfulness for others, her perfect conformity to the will of God. One day, Mother M. C. praying at the bedside of the sufferer, said to her, paraphrasing the Church prayers: "Now, dear sister, we recommend thee to the Almighty God, whose creature thou art;" adding, "but tell Him, please, dear Bon, that though we are very willing that He should have the reversion of you, we should be deeply

grateful if He would lend you to us for a little while, as we cannot well spare you yet." Sister Bonaventure gave one of her joyous little laughs, and said: "Very well, very well; I will." When Mother M. C. left the room the dying ministress said to the sister who remained with her: "Oh, dear sister, never lose an opportunity of saying a kind word; you cannot think how that little word Mother M. C. said to me has set me up. To think that *I* could be of use to anyone!"

Early on the morning of the 23rd of May, 1870, the mother-rectress breathed her last, and in the evening the sister-ministress was no more. Together they were laid before the altar, together they were bewailed and prayed over, together they were carried forth and laid to rest beneath the consecrated sod.

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## XIII.

### IN THE WEST.

MEANWHILE, the community in the county of Galway were by no means at a stand-still. Clarinbridge was a remote settlement indeed, situated on a stream which a little farther on flowed into the great Atlantic; and its inhabitants were of a primitive order of civilisation. The oldest inhabitants could remember when the bridge which gave its name to the village was nothing more than a plank or two laid across the flood, over which the people passed on foot, while horses and other quadrupeds waded through the river. Under the care of excellent landlords much advance had subsequently been made by the people; but the Sisters of Charity found that their work among the rustic population afforded a wide scope for zeal and patience.

After some time the sick mission was extended to Oranmore, and even beyond it, at the desire of some of the Renville family who provided the sisters with a little car for the purpose. Thus possessed of a conveyance, the nuns were able also to include in their visiting range that portion of the Clarinbridge district which reaches five or six miles eastwards of the convent. The poor people living in these remote districts had of course never known the comfort of a visit from nuns of any kind. Great therefore was their delight when they saw "the blessed women from Clarinbridge" coming to see them in their little cabins.

Mr. and Mrs. Buckle, among many good works carried out by

them for the benefit of the inhabitants of Oranmore and its neighbourhood, had established little lodging-houses for poor homeless women, to whom they allowed small weekly pensions according to the necessities of each. It was hoped by the charitable founders that the sisters would take charge altogether of these poor women, but the distance from the convent rendered this impossible, and the nuns could undertake no more than to visit the pensioners once a week, and do whatever they could under the circumstances in superintending their spiritual and temporal concerns.

Some efforts were occasionally made for the religious improvement of the Connemara boatmen who brought their turf for sale to Clarinbridge in the summer time. Much, however, could not be done, for having come up at high water and emptied their boats, they were generally anxious to get home by the returning tide. In primitive simplicity they surpassed even the inhabitants of Clarinbridge, and would have been extremely benefited by the influence the sisters could have brought to bear upon them.

Better success attended the mission of the Sisters of Charity in regard to a class of men who, living on the sea-shore near Clarinbridge, earned their livelihood by unloading turf and seaweed boats. Unfortunately they were easily drawn into habits of intemperance. All they earned by hard work during the day, they squandered at the public-house in the evening. On Sundays and holidays they absented themselves from Mass, and not unfrequently closed the Sabbath with serious fights, from which they returned to their miserable homes with bleeding heads.

A young man belonging to this community having hurt his hand at work was obliged to go to the convent to have it dressed. The accident was a happy one; for the young man, being well disposed, received in good part the advice that was given him, went regularly to the convent to be prepared for the sacraments, and was the means of inducing his father and several of his comrades to attend instructions in the chapel and to reform their habits of life.

With the aid of some kind friends a little library was collected at the convent; the people were, for the most part, too poor to pay any subscription, and the books were therefore generally circulated gratis; but the nuns had reason to be satisfied that much good was done by providing the people with instructive and amusing literature. In several houses, as they learned, the fireside was crowded with attentive listeners while one of the company read aloud an interesting Catholic tale, or, what was particularly attractive to the serious-minded, a good catechetical work. The nuns soon discovered that the people liked what was at once plain in terms and strong in sense, and calculated to exercise their faculties. Frequently they were asked for "a *fine* book, that'll go through you," or "sthur you;" and

once a ragman said he wanted "a *good* book for a woman that was in affliction and confusion: one that she could devise upon."

A young man who suffered a long time from a very sore leg, being fond of reading, used to collect about him on Sundays the young men of the village; and converting the table into a sofa for the accommodation of the disabled limb, he would recline on it for hours together, while he entertained his friends and himself by reading aloud some entertaining book procured from the convent library. One evening a woman being among his auditors, she was so edified and charmed with what she saw and heard that she declared it was a blessed day James got the sore leg, that it would delight any one to hear him read—just equal to any missioner!

Later on, an evening-class of instruction for men was established. This work began in a very simple way. One poor old man, who was rather hard of hearing, not having been found sufficiently acquainted with the Christian doctrine to receive confirmation, was handed over to the Sisters of Charity for instruction. Soon after, another person in the same plight presented himself, and asked leave to bring a comrade. Then a man made his appearance and said: "I hear ye do be giving good advices here. I come to get some, as I want to turn over a new leaf in my life."

At length so large a number assembled that it was thought necessary to form them into a properly constituted body or society. This was done by the establishment of a sodality under the title of the "Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary." A president and a committee regulate the affairs of the society. New members go through a certain probationary course before they are admitted as "guardsmen." On Sunday and holiday afternoons they meet in the schoolroom, where a large supply of books is left for their use. At half-past five o'clock the public instructions and devotions begin, at which the attention and fervour of the men are quite remarkable. Before long, two hundred members were enrolled in the Guard of Honour, and excellent was the example they gave in the regularity of their attendance to their religious duties, and their conduct in the affairs of every-day life. Most of all was the change felt in their own homes. Many wives have blessed God and blessed the convent for "the changed men their husbands are since they joined the guard." A case of drunkenness is of very rare occurrence among them.

Neither were the women neglected by the Sisters of Charity. A society was formed of the mothers and grandmothers of the village with the object of drawing them to instruction, and teaching them to sanctify their home life, to prepare for the sacraments, and to fulfil the duties they owe their children. Then there was the Sodality of the Children of Mary, established for the girls who had

left school and were occupied in various ways in their own homes or in the service of others.

Thus did the nuns gain possession, so to say, of every class of the rustic and village population. The convent became the centre of every good movement, and like the Divine Providence of which it was an emanation, spread a sweet influence around. By degrees a vast amount of ignorance was dispelled; gross superstitions were put an end to; and the traces of a degrading proselytism were finally obliterated. In a word, the all too real faults of the native population were corrected, while their many virtues were strengthened. The destitute and the sorrowful were relieved and comforted, and all were helped on their pilgrimage through this life of vicissitude and danger to the haven of eternal rest.

The Sisters of Charity lost a true friend, and the people a generous benefactor and indulgent landlord in Sir Thomas Redington, whose death occurred on the 11th of October, 1862. The summons came to him in the midst of worldly prosperity, and at a moment when life seemed unusually bright. Yet he was perfectly resigned to the will of heaven; thankful to God for giving him a good mother who had brought him up well; and grateful to the nuns whose prayers, he believed, had obtained for him the great grace of unbounded confidence in the mercy of God, which he experienced in his last illness. Before he passed away he spoke of each of the sisters and begged to be remembered to them.

About ten years later, in the month of December, 1872, his excellent mother, the foundress of Our Lady's Priory, died at Boulogne. Her remains were brought to Ireland and laid in the convent lawn, literally within the shadow of the sanctuary. The spot was chosen by her pious grandson that her soul might have the benefit of the prayers of the poor whom she had loved so well; and over her grave he erected a handsome stone cross, which perpetuates her memory and forms a striking and beautiful object in the convent grounds.

All through the period from the foundation of the convent to her happy death, Mother Mary Baptist Griffin ruled as rectress. Of a refined and elevated nature, she was what people loved to call her—a sweet saint. Gentleness, humility, and piety were her characteristics. Her power over those who came within her influence was remarkable, and nothing was more touching than the affectionate reverence with which the stalwart guardsmen regarded her. With heaven, too, it was evident that she had great influence, and many are the instances recorded of the answers vouchsafed to the prayers of Mother Mary Baptist Griffin.[1]

[1] While the earlier sheets of this work were passing through the press, Mother Mary Baptist Griffin was called to her reward. She died on the 5th of December, 1878.*

## XIV.

### ST. VINCENT'S ANNALS.

TO St. Vincent's Hospital, increasing years seemed only to bring increase of strength and added means for carrying on its important and beneficent work. Charitable support was never withdrawn from that institution; and even when another great hospital of a similar character was opened in the city, no diminution of public favour was experienced by the older foundation. The Catholic heart was large enough to embrace both, and unfortunately the needs of the poor required all the help that charity could devise for their relief.

In 1858, an addition was made to the hospital which, while it greatly increased the beauty, order, and comfort of the institution, provided separate cells for the nuns—an advantage which they had not enjoyed since the establishment of the hospital in 1834. Two years later another much needed improvement was carried out in the enlargement and decoration of the chapel.

While the builders were at work in the chapel, Mother Mary Lucy Clifford, being seriously ill, was removed to the hospital that she might be under the immediate care of Dr. O'Ferrall, who had often attended and relieved her. This time she seemed to have a presentiment that she should not again leave St. Vincent's. Having endured great sufferings with unalterable patience, and given to the end an example of every virtue, she breathed her last on the 4th of August, 1860.

Among the trials of that year the community justly reckoned the loss of their generous benefactor, Mr. James Murphy. As unostentatious as he was generous, he was in the habit of paying frequent visits to the hospital in a quiet way, and seldom without giving from £10 to £50 for its benefit. Though he bequeathed at his death a munificent sum to the institution, his kind visits and constant help were greatly missed. Another good friend, Miss Kinsella, died about the same time; and in the previous year died Mr. Browne, printer to the congregation—a much esteemed friend and a generous supporter of all the institutions of the Sisters of Charity.

An interior view of the hospital, and a sketch of some of its characteristic features was given in one of a series of articles entitled "Pictures of Town," which appeared a few years ago in the *Freeman's Journal*. From the "picture" of St. Vincent's we take the following outlines drawn from the life:—

"St. Vincent's has always struck me as a singular combination of elegance, cheerfulness, and comfort. The main building, as we have seen,

was not originally intended for a hospital. Despite its altered destination the characteristics of a lordly mansion still subsist in the magnificent staircase, the beautifully stuccoed ceilings, and the finely proportioned apartments. It is as little like an asylum for human misery as any place of the kind I ever saw. On days when the patients' friends are allowed to see them, a walk through the wards is most interesting. The visitors, to whom the grandeur of the house is new and delightful, go about admiring things as if they were at an exhibition; the nuns, with a good and pleasant word for all, are at their post; and the people in the beds, as I have many times remarked, look as if they thought they had got into the outer courts of heaven. There is nothing to shock the most sensitive. Even in the mortuary chapel, where the dead lie before the little altar, an air of peace and reverence prevails. The chapel where the nuns assemble for Mass and Benediction and their own offices, and to which the patients who can leave the wards have access, is beautifully designed and exquisitely decorated. I have been told that the expensive ornamental parts were supplied by the private resources of the nuns, or donations received for that purpose. Before the high altar a beautiful silver lamp, with a setting of amethysts and carbuncles, is suspended. It cost £87, and was the gift of a respectable body of men in Dublin who constantly have representatives among the patients.

"If popularity be any advantage to a hospital, St. Vincent's may boast of a large share. One of the sisters' greatest trials is having to refuse admittance to persons who have set their heart on getting in, and yet are not fit cases for the hospital. Sometimes in spite of rules and reasons the poor creatures contrive to have their wish gratified; as was the case on one occasion with a girl whose look of infinite distress and piteous appeal to be received 'until she made her peace with God,' so won upon the sisters that admission was granted, and the afflicted soul restored to grace and happily prepared for death. A different scene took place on another occasion, when a poor schoolmaster, who had long thrown off the restraints of religion, refused to take a denial. Stamping and swearing were of no avail; the case was not admissible, and the hospital was overcrowded. But when the sister who had gone for a moment to make a representation to the authorities returned to where she had left the man, she found he had cut his throat. Of course he could not then be sent away, for the case had become an urgent one; but for some time the nuns could not approach him, he was so outrageous. In the end he recovered from the injury he had inflicted on himself, but died of the original complaint; not, however, until he had been restored to grace and perfect sanity. Hardly less intense than the anxiety to get in to be cured is the desire to get inside the door to die. Death in the midst of peace and holiness when all the troubles of the world have been left behind, is robbed of his worst terrors. Often and often the patients lying on their death-bed have been heard to say that the days or weeks they spent in St. Vincent's were the happiest of their life. Under the influence of the same desire for peace before death, persons of a far different rank from that of ordinary patients, have besought the sisters to extend to them the benefits which the humblest of the sick poor enjoyed. As for those who have seen better days, or who having met with some misfortune or fallen into some disgrace are ashamed to meet the eye of relatives, they too are from time to time to be seen in the hospital, when sickness has struck them down. . . . .

"I have no doubt that a story-teller would find many a character, and many an o'er true tale, to exercise his talent on, if he strayed into the wards, note-book in hand. People from all parts of the country are to be met with. Even from England will they sometimes come to look for healing. In Lancashire, especially, the establishment is held in high repute. Whenever there is a Frenchman in the hospital there is sure to be a constant

succession of foreign visitors. The French are remarked for their kindness to their sick compatriots; and on such occasions they bring in all kinds of dainties and the nicest little dishes imaginable, to tempt the languid appetite. Italians, too, are found on the list, from time to time; and it is an affecting scene when one of the poor fellows dies, and the rest come to mourn over him in the passionate southern manner, and take him away for burial. On the return of the Irish Brigade from Rome, a great many of the brave Zouaves found their way to St. Vincent's. I think there were at one time fifteen or sixteen of them—some with wounds, and some with agues and chest affections caught in the campaign. But it would be tedious to enumerate the cases and classes that pass through this great institution, and receive, as a matter of course, some relief—some benediction. If bodily health be not restored, the mind, at least, will be subjected to good influences. If death cannot be averted, the passage 'from life to life through a brief darkness' will be made a happy one. Those who in renewed strength return to fight the battle of life, do so with purer souls and high resolve. To many the weeks spent at St. Vincent's have proved the turning point, the term of a stormy career, the beginning of a reformed life. First communions have been administered here to men and women who had left their youth behind, marriages have taken place in the little chapel that ought to have long ago been solemnised, drunkards have been reclaimed, and enmities set at rest. Beyond all hope must be the man who is not bettered by a sojourn in a place so full of beneficent influences. The very worst is treated with respect, and thus learns to respect himself.

"As might be expected the gratitude of the patients is evinced in many touching ways. I have been shown all kinds of gifts from corkscrews and medicine mugs to ornamental productions for bazaars, testifying to the anxiety of former patients to do something for the institution. Many little wants noticed by artificers during their sickness or convalesence, have been afterwards supplied by their thoughtfulness and skill. Tokens of grateful recollection have been sent to St. Vincent's from the most distant places. One man who had emigrated to Australia used to send half a sovereign every year to the hospital in the old land. Indeed the establishment is pretty well known wherever Irishmen have penetrated. In New York and Melbourne I understand hospitals have been founded on the same model, and called by the same name. . . . .

"The faith and charity of the illustrious Order, of which it is the special work, have found a response worthy of our people. Every class makes some offering. The poor give their mite, the well-to-do their larger gift. Regular subscribers of course enjoy the privilege of recommending patients. Rich people, who are charitable as well, give considerable donations occasionally, or have a bed in the hospital, to which they can always send a patient. I noticed ten or twelve of these 'endowed beds,' which represent £20 per annum each. I am surprised there are not many more, and that all the large manufactories and extensive establishments in the city do not have beds in this or in other hospitals, to which without strain on public charity, the workmen who meet with accidents in their employment by falling from scaffolding, being badly scalded, or injured by machinery, could be sent at once as a matter of right.

"Though it is hardly necessary to do so, I may as well add that the religion of applicants makes no difference whatever in their reception or rejection. Seldom is the hospital without Protestant patients, who are as accessible to the minister as the Catholics are to the priest. Among the subscribers are many Protestants, and I have myself known members of that creed who were warm friends of the institution and constant visitors.

"A few years ago the superiors of the hospital made an application to the Corporation of Dublin, stating the difficulty of keeping up the work from

year to year, and claiming such assistance as similar establishments were in receipt of. Promptly and considerately the claim was allowed, and since then a yearly grant of £300 has been allotted to St. Vincent's. This is honourable to the Corporation, and a great help to the sisterhood. However, lest it might be supposed that the grant goes farther than it really does, it may as well be mentioned that the meat bills alone mount up to nearly £1,000 a year."

In 1864, an important addition was made to the hospital system of which St. Vincent's is the centre, by the establishment of a convalescent home for the reception of patients who, after recovery from severe illness, require change of air and rest. The munificence of a gentleman, Mr. Francis Coppinger, of Monkstown Castle, through the kind agency of the Rev. John O'Rourke, parish priest of Maynooth, provided the Sisters of Charity with the means for starting this much needed work. Linden Castle, a residence near Stillorgan, was offered for sale about this time, and having been found suitable in internal arrangements, and possessing the advantages of a healthy and convenient situation, was purchased early in the year, and opened with religious ceremonial on the feast of the Sacred Heart. Some additions having been made to the original structure, accommodation was afforded for twenty patients and the nuns in charge of the institution.

The convalescents get stronger and more varied diet than patients in hospital, are most comfortably provided for in every way, and in fine weather enjoy the open air and take exercise according to their strength. Adjoining the Linden fields is a place called "the grove," which is rented by the Sisters of Charity, and affords the patients shady walks and resting-places, where, *unter den Linden*, they may spend the day without fatigue or danger. The grove originally formed a part of the grand approach to the seat of the Earls of Carysfort, the whole avenue having been planted in days gone by with six long lines of lime-trees.

Linden was the first convalescent home established in Ireland.[1] No provision had hitherto, even in the smallest way, been made for patients recovering from illness, except by the managers of the Adelaide Hospital, who for a year or two before the opening of the Linden Home had sent a few of their patients to a small house out of town. It was thought at the time that the opening of the convalescent home at Linden would excite public sympathy, and probably, to the great advantage of the labouring classes, lead to the erection of other similar institutions. Indeed it had hardly commenced working when a project was set on foot to establish a convalescent house

[1] The scope and usefulness of the convalescent home have of late been greatly extended by the connection with it of the Mullins' Institution. For which, and for the Children's Hospital, see Appendix.

for general patients at no great distance from Linden. The late Judge Berwick, who was the prime mover in this good work, if not its originator, sought to put it under the care of the Sisters of Charity, believing that their management would secure the maintenance of comfort and order in the establishment. However, they were not able to undertake the charge of a second convalescent home at that time, and were obliged to decline the offer.

This good friend, and his no less estimable sister, Miss Berwick, cannot be hastily passed over when mention is made of liberal subscribers and constant visitors to St. Vincent's. A favourite servant, being at one time a patient in the hospital, was the cause in the first instance of the acquaintance, which afterwards ripened into friendship, between the community and the Berwicks. Nothing could exceed the attention they paid to this poor girl while she was in St. Vincent's, nor their gratitude for what the nuns were able to do for her. Protestants themselves, they were nevertheless so free from prejudice, and so generous in sentiment and deed, that they permitted a young man who was a butler in their service to pursue his studies for the priesthood under their roof, giving him time and opportunity for doing so until he started for Rome. On returning to Ireland after his ordination, he was most cordially received by the Judge and Miss Berwick.

They often had patients in the hospital, and were fully entitled to the privilege, for they were generous in their donations. Once it happened that the Judge had one patient in the children's ward, and Miss Berwick had another; they used to visit them separately, and bring cakes and presents sufficient to enable the little ones to divide with the other children; and this they would encourage them to do in order to teach them generosity. Their niece, a most amiable girl, many years of whose young life were passed on a sick bed, also took a great interest in the hospital, and bequeathed to it a legacy of £100. Brother and sister were not only benefactors to the hospital, but they were also kind personal friends to the community: loving the nuns, writing them interesting letters, and sending them little presents, such as fresh fruit from the gardens of St. Edmundsbury, their country-seat near Lucan.

Before starting on the journey to Italy, from which they never returned to Ireland, they went to St. Vincent's, and in talking to the rectress, said that they should have a long conversation with her on convalescent affairs when they returned. The brother and sister were inseparable during life; and in death they were not divided. They lost their lives in the terrible accident which occurred to the Irish mail train at Abergele, on the 21st of August, 1868. Many friends mourned their loss, but their memory is nowhere more tenderly cherished than at St. Vincent's.

During a long course of years one of the best known and best beloved of the nuns attached to St. Vincent's Hospital was Sister Mary Otteran Kier. She was a native of Waterford, and entered religion rather late in life. Soon after her profession she was appointed to the hospital. To a great love of labour, unusual strength of character, and considerable capacity for business, she united wide sympathies, a warm heart, and a peculiar gift of making and keeping friends. The influence which she acquired was wisely and courageously used for the good of others, the advantage of the institution, and the glory of God. She was perpetually planning good of some kind or another; nothing was too small, nothing too great for her. She had the simplicity of a child in pursuing some little object which would help or gratify a superior or a sister; and yet she displayed the strength and dignity of no ordinary woman in matters calling for decision, direction, and firmness of purpose.

These latter qualities were of great use, for she had always much to do with doctors, students, and externs; and was entrusted with difficult, and sometimes painful negotiations and arrangements. Never did she shirk a disagreeable encounter; and she would return with a sore heart for the pain she had caused, and very sensible of her own share in the suffering, after having appeared a stern reprover in cases where correction had to be given. On these occasions there was always a justness in her reasons and a dignity in her manner which ensured respect. Those who knew her best could see that she prized these opportunities. It was not merely that she "held fast what she had, and let not another take her crown," but she put in for the "hard thing" and took the odium on herself. If anything went wrong among the *attachés* or the servants of the hospital and she knew there might be a difficulty about the settlement of it, she would go quietly to the office, and say significantly to the rectress, "If you want me, you know where I am." Even in little matters, such as dismissing a patient who was reluctant to leave, the same spirit was shown. Sometimes she would say to the sister who assisted her in the ward: "Tell so-and-so he is to go;" then, immediately recalling the word, she would add: "No; wait—I shall tell him myself."

Love of poverty made Mrs. Kier like begging; and she often said she would not care for anything unless she had begged it. Certainly she could get whatever she wished from the least to the greatest; but then, she put herself to much trouble, and made her applications in such a way that those whom she asked thought they were the party complimented. Her sweet open countenance and her winning manner, as well as the real, lively interest she exhibited in their affairs went a good way in obtaining her desires. Among the projects she set on foot for the benefit of the hospital was the organisation of regular grants and subscriptions from guilds and confraternities,

entitling them to send patients from their own body, or to recommend cases. The painters, coopers, St. Simon Stock Society, and other associations were of this number. And the Metropolitan Police were not behind-hand. The men of the force were deeply indebted to the institution, and showed their gratitude in the most substantial way. If on the one hand it might be asserted that few persons in the city of Dublin were "better known to the police" than Mrs. Kier; on the other it might be said that if she set her heart on procuring anything for the hospital or the chapel, it would go hard with the men if they did not get it for her.

Mrs. Kier's friends, however, were not all of the same social rank. The Earl of Carlisle, who has already been mentioned as a benefactor of St. Vincent's in its early days, was no less a friend during the later term of his viceroyalty in Ireland. He often visited the wards where Mrs. Kier presided, and talked in the kindest and most agreeable way to the patients.

On Sundays, or on week-day evenings, numbers of her former patients visited Mrs. Kier to give an account of themselves and have a talk about their families. She would form an opinion of the way they were getting on, from certain signs—such as their clothes. If they were comfortably dressed she took it as a proof that they had not been idling or drinking, and she would praise them for their respectable appearance; or, if she knew they had not been going on well, she would pretend not to be aware of their shortcomings, and, while expressing her confidence in them, would restore their self-respect and lead them to better things.

Sister Mary Otteran had great strength of constitution, but about eight years before her death her eyes began to fail, and cataracts appeared soon after. From the first it was deemed an unfit case for operation, and the prospect was a sad one. Gradually the sight weakened; one by one duties had to be resigned into other hands; and at last the ward, dear as the apple of her eye, had to be given up. Nothing was then left to her but the externs and the admissions. Strange to say, she could manage that duty almost to the last. It was the most humbling and distressing of all, for the blame of refusing cases was frequently attributed to her, and many an abusive tongue made free with her name.

Judging beforehand, one might say that the trial of blindness would be worse than death to Sister Mary Otteran Kier. But it was far otherwise. She took up her cross, and followed the guiding hand of God. No word of impatience on this subject ever crossed her lips. God had sent this visitation, she said, to one who, like her, had always been engaged in the active life, and she felt it was an immediate preparation for the other world: it gave her time to pray. At length she had to give up everything unless her warm and holy interest in

the institute, the hospital, and those whom God had given her to love for Him, to pray for, and to help. She sent last advice, last blessings, last encouragements, last promises to many faithful humble friends, most of them former patients or benefactors who had long been in the habit of consulting her, and looking to her wisdom for light. To the sisters about her she was all sweetness and consideration. After intense suffering, heroically borne, she was released on the 26th of October, 1873.

Once, when Sister Mary Otteran was in her prime, she was sitting in the dead hour of the night in her ward watching the last moments of a dying man. She saw him fix his eyes on her intently for a few minutes, and then, in words which thrilled through her as they solemnly broke the stillness of the hour, he said: "*I am looking at you, that I may know you in heaven.*" One cannot help thinking that many another grateful recognition greeted her appearance in the better world.

Only a few years before Mrs. Kier bade a last adieu to "the dear hospital," there passed away one who for a still longer time, and in a most important way, had been connected with the institution. This was "the doctor" by excellence, Joseph Michael O'Ferrall. For thirty-four years he was the presiding genius of the institution in its medical character. If, in the early part of his career, St. Vincent's "made a man of him," as people said, on the other hand he made St. Vincent's what it became—a great school of medicine. From the establishment of the hospital up to the last hour of his life he was its first physician; and in it he found full play for the powers of his intellect, a fine scope for his scientific genius, and no small comfort for a heart that was naturally kind. The religious character of the institution was not forgotten. So great was his respect for human life that, to prolong it for an hour, he would set every energy to work, and add prescription to prescription after every looker-on saw that it was only a question of moments. He is said to have tried many different remedies on himself, either to test their value or to ascertain the amount of pain they would cause the patient.

The weakness of sight from which he suffered in his latter years, and which he endeavoured to hide from observation, painfully affected his spirits. For many years before his death he could not read, and could only see objects with any distinctness from one point of view, or in a certain light. But his sense of touch was marvellous, and enabled him to detect conditions which the clearest vision could not perceive. It was no wonder that, with the consciousness of power he possessed and the difficulties he had to encounter, his manner should occasionally be irritable, or that the sisters should have now and then a hard enough task in attending him. They needed to have all their wits about them; the more so as, when he was unable to write

his prescriptions, the sister of the ward should take his verbal orders about the medicine. Sometimes he was downright uncivil; but then he would afterwards spare no pains to remove any disagreeable impression he might have made on his friends. He would return again and again on one pretence or another, all blandness and gentleness, to see if he were forgiven. His very faults in this respect were of use in making the sisters in his wards vigilant in detecting symptoms, and accustoming them to act with promptitude on all occasions. Whenever he saw that a sister was intelligently interested in a case, she rose high in his esteem, and he would take the greatest pains in explaining to her the nature of the disease, and the course of treatment to be adopted.

Dr. O'Ferrall's strong faith and sincere religious feeling sustained him when the heavy trials of slow disease and death had to be encountered. He had a slight attack of paralysis; then a severe seizure; he became unable to walk without two supporters; and finally he had to be carried everywhere. All was borne with courage. His mind retained its vigour, he still saw patients, and only two nights before his death attended the sick-bed of an old friend living at a short distance from town. The disease was then approaching the throat, in which he experienced considerable uneasiness and some pain. He felt its gradual progress, but apparently did not realise the imminence of his danger until a servant gave him notice of it. Then, tranquilly and piously he made his immediate preparation for death; confessed to a young Passionist Father, received the last sacraments, and expressed his wishes to his sister regarding the final distribution of his property. The rectress of St. Vincent's paid him a parting visit shortly before he expired. He spoke of the life that was now drawing to a close; of the gratitude he owed to God for the blessings He had sent him—good health and talents, of which he had made the best use he could; and said how willing and glad he was to go to his Creator. He asked the mother-rectress minutely about her own health, which was then delicate, felt her pulse, and was a physician to the last.

Two hours later, about six o'clock on Christmas Eve, 1868, his sister, who was watching in the room, suddenly missed the accustomed sound of his breathing, and going over to his bed, found that he had passed away. A death so little painful, so calm, and so collected, was believed by those who had witnessed his extraordinary endeavours to save pain to the dying—who are oftentimes left as hopeless cases in whom the physician has no further concern—to be the reward of his charity in this respect. Doubtless the prayers of the poor, to whom he had devoted his time and energies unremittingly; as well as the care he took to give timely notice of a patient's danger, that the soul might receive all possible help; were taken into account at the judgment seat. He left a handsome legacy to the Carmelite com-

munity whose predecessors had befriended his mother in the day of her distress, and showed kindness to him in his youth; and his remains were laid in the vaults of their church. Nor was St. Vincent's forgotten in the distribution of the fortune he had acquired. He left a considerable amount of property in reversion to the hospital after the decease of his sister, subject, however, to any alteration she might think fit to make.[1]

Sister Mary Emilian Bradshaw, who, when last we spoke of her was in the early stages of a career which connected her for forty years with St. Vincent's Hospital, claims in this place another word of affectionate remembrance. Her office during all those years was the spiritual instruction of the patients in the male wards. Ardent zeal in this work was perhaps her chief characteristic, and God undoubtedly gave her a special grace to enable her to go through the arduous task with ease and success. Sometimes she had to come in contact with men who possessed considerable powers of mind, and were accustomed to be a light unto themselves; many of her patients were habitually negligent in spiritual matters; and a few were decidedly irreligious. Nature had not seemed to endow her with qualities likely to be of use under such circumstances. Her extreme simplicity of manner appeared to augur badly for the success of her instructions. But whether it was the gift of prayer which she possessed, or the special grace above alluded to, that made her well-nigh irresistible, one thing is certain—the poor souls bowed to some power that was in her, and it was almost a thing unknown that any one held out against her persuasions, or persisted in refusing to be reconciled to God by the sacraments. At one time, towards the end of her life, it was represented to her superiors that her manner of instructing was not sufficiently guided by conventionalities and human prudence, and that her zeal made her too exacting in little things. The subject was then mentioned to a very holy and enlightened ecclesiastic, whose answer was: "Let her go on. It is clear that the Spirit of God works with her."

Besides the instruction of about forty men daily, Sister Mary Emilian prepared a number of children for the sacraments; she frequently assembled them in an evening class, and was always greatly devoted to them; the youngsters were fond of her, and she had sensible consolation in her dealings with them. When they grew up they still came from time to time to talk over their hopes and plans with

[1] In a series of papers on "Great Irish Surgeons," which appeared in the *Irish Monthly*, vol. vi., Dr. Mapother gives lengthened and interesting biographical notices of Dr. O'Ferrall and Dr. Bellingham. Full justice is done to the latter, who was a man of estimable character as well as of distinguished talent. Though in St. Vincent's he was somewhat thrown into the shade by the first physician's very pronounced personality, he was always held in the highest regard by the Sisters of Charity, to whom his amiability, his self-devotion, and his conscientiousness endeared him. He died in 1857.

their friend, Mrs. Bradshaw. Many a confidence was given, many a vocation encouraged. Some became priests at home, or missioners in distant lands, or nuns; while others made good members of society and exemplary heads of families, who in after years sent their little ones to her, as they had gone themselves, to learn how to please God.

Sister Mary Emilian was particularly thoughtful and obliging in doing little services to the other members of the community, and would put herself to much trouble and inconvenience to procure them any help or gratification. If it so happened that, owing to the pressure of other occupations, or in a moment of disinclination, she refused a thing (and her charity was often taken advantage of) the person who asked might be absolutely certain of finding what she wanted in her cell or place of prayer next day. A refusal was the most hopeful sign of all. And so, too, it was if a sister chanced to annoy or disoblige her; she would go out of her way to show that sister some special mark of kindness the following day.

For many years she suffered greatly from neuralgia in the head; but this she never allowed to interfere with her duties to the patients. Every morning she was to be seen laden with books, making her way to the ward, and was often told in jest that she would die under her burden on the corridor, without time for a regular death-bed. She would laugh and enjoy the joke. And yet it almost turned out so. Her last illness took little time, and death was as promptly accepted and accomplished as the other events and acts of her life had been.

About the middle of July, 1874, as the feast of her patron, St. Jerome Emilian, drew near, she remarked to the infirmarian that for several years past she had been sick on that day, but she was going to use "a little *finesse*" this time and take some precautions to forestall the attack. She did so, and the plan seemed to succeed. She was particularly well on the feast, and spent a most happy day. It happened that sisters from another house were spending the morning at St. Vincent's, and they sang during Mass, which delighted her exceedingly. She told the patients how beautiful it was, and how it was "our own sisters" who sang, &c. &c. There were other little pleasures prepared for the celebration of the feast, and she retired at night talking of the kindness of the mother-rectress in a very grateful manner.

During the night she must have got some attack of faintness or illness; in the morning she was found very weak and suffering; and soon it was seen that she was in a dying state. Though not able to swallow what the infirmarian wished her to take, she could nevertheless speak perfectly well. From the first she appears to have felt that the end was come. When some one said: "What could have brought this on?" she replied: "Nothing at all, sister; it was just the will of God." Later she made her confession and received Extreme Unction.

With true Christian composure she awaited death; she had nothing to go back upon, nothing to arrange for the future. When, however, the remembrance of God's goodness came to her mind she spoke freely. For nearly two hours she talked about her happy life and the pleasure she had always felt in her duties; the delight she took in giving instructions; the ever-new joy it was to her to go to the poor men and try to get them into the right dispositions and put them on the road to heaven. This joy was so great, she said, and she had had so much of it on earth, that she feared she should have no reward in heaven. She considered it a great favour and a good omen that her death-illness began on the feast of her holy patron, whom she always loved, and whose life she had shortly before translated from the Italian to make him better known to the patients and the sisters. With night came the oppression and restlessness of approaching death; after a time she ceased to speak; and then quietly, almost without a sign, she breathed out her soul, shortly before midnight, on the 21st of July, 1874, in the 73rd year of her age.

The Brothers of the Confraternity, Whitefriar-street, sang the office over the remains in the hospital chapel on the following evening, and the priests on the next day. A former patient, commenting on her death, said that she was the *eagerest* woman where a soul was concerned that he ever knew! This was a true description; and heaven only knows how many souls were won to God by her patient, prayerful, persevering work in St. Vincent's wards.

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## XV.

### MRS. MAC CARTHY'S LAST FOUNDATIONS—HER DEATH.

MRS. MAC CARTHY had not been very long exercising her important office of superior-general when it became all too evident to her children that she was destined, like Mrs. Aikenhead, to wear out in constant suffering the last years of her valuable life. Her naturally vigorous constitution had supported her through a long course of arduous labour both of mind and body; but a severe accident which she met with in 1860, by her foot slipping on some oil that had fallen on the tiled floor of the cloister, disabled her to a great extent for active duty and brought on maladies from which she never recovered. Though for some time she went about to make her foundations, the undertaking in each case was attended with great difficulty. The getting in and out of cabs and railway carriages was in itself a labour, and caused such suffering as often to force tears from her eyes, though never a complaint from her lips.

In 1864, Mrs. MacCarthy was again elected superior-general, uniting all the votes; and when, in 1870, the term of her office once more expired, the result was not a release from the weighty cares that inevitably press upon the mother of the congregation, but a third, and a unanimous election.

In the previous year, 1869, she made her seventh foundation by establishing the Convent of the Visitation at Baldoyle. This foundation was made on the invitation of the Very Rev. Canon Smithwick, the parish priest, an old and highly-esteemed friend of the foundress of the congregation; the principal object being the visitation of the sick and the instruction of the poor. The coming of the nuns was a cause of great rejoicing. Triumphal arches were erected for the occasion, the children of the village dressed in white and wearing garlands accompanied the priest and people who at some distance from the convent met the community. An address was read, verses and flowers were presented, and the sisters were conducted to the church where Benediction was given, hymns were sung, and prayers were offered up. Finally the convent—a house which had belonged to the corporation of Dublin—was reached, and the interesting proceedings were terminated by a dejeuner. From the convent there is a lovely view: Howth, Lambay, and Ireland's Eye standing out beyond the foreground of shore and sea. In the front is the village green where the fishermen, a primitive and virtuous race, congregate and spin their yarns of an evening. The sick-mission extends from Howth to the neighbourhood of Malahide on one side of the peninsula on which stands Baldoyle, and from Sutton to the junction on the other. Large schools have been erected near the convent through the generosity of Blanche Lady Fitzgerald, and the nuns visit for religious instruction the National Schools of Howth, Kinsealy, and Portmarnock.

Mrs. MacCarthy made in 1870 her eighth and last foundation—St. Patrick's Hospital for Incurables, in Cork: the community taking possession of their convent on the 14th of September, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. There is no need now to enter into the detail of early difficulties; it will be sufficient to note the origin and the progress of an institution nobly designed for the succour of God's most afflicted creatures, and destined, it is hoped, to reach a development in some degree commensurate with the sad needs of those whose last earthly desire is to gain admittance to St. Patrick's wards, and to die there in peace. The founder of the institution was Dr. Patrick Murphy, who, dying in December, 1867, left a considerable property to the Sisters of Charity in Cork, on condition of their having within two years from the time of his decease a hospital or room for cancer patients. The donor had early in life studied for the medical profession and taken his degree. He was

said to have possessed considerable talent, but at the outset of his career seemed to abandon any desire for practice, and adopted a singular mode of life. Having become possessed of a tan-yard and some house property, his whole aim seemed to be to deny himself and hoard up money with the view of comforting and sheltering in the end poor sufferers from painful and incurable diseases, especially cancer. During the course of his studies he had taken particular notice of this form of suffering, its extreme repulsiveness, and consequent neglect; and the Sisters of Charity had won his admiration and gratitude during the cholera visitation, by their heroic self-devotion in the hospitals, and their special goodness in attending the death-bed of his father, and also of his sister who fell a victim to that plague. In 1849, he made a will providing, as above stated, for his favourite charity; and twenty years afterwards, when he was making every effort to begin himself the work he projected, he was found dead one morning in his miserable dwelling.

It was no easy matter to find out and to realise the property which lay scattered in various directions; but when all was arranged, it was thought best to expend the ready money obtained by the sale of the tan-yard and its stock on the purchase of a site and the building of a hospital, and to let the remainder, about £300 a year, go towards the support of the incurables, the payment of ground-rent, &c. A plot of ground beautifully situated on the Glanmire-hill, in St. Patrick's parish, having been purchased, the first stone of the new building was laid on the 8th of May, 1869, under the auspices of the glorious St. Michael. If difficulties arose during the building, none the less did energetic and devoted friends appear upon the scene. Among these must specially be mentioned the Rev. Canon Browne, the Rev. John Delay, the Rev. William Lane, and Mr. Patrick Dunn, all of whom gave time and thought and active co-operation in the furtherance of the undertaking. And, as it became evident that the funds in hands could not cover all expenses, other benefactors came to the aid of the congregation. Mr. John Fitzgerald, a citizen of Cork, gave £800 towards the building; Mr. Richard Simpson of Dublin added £500 for the furnishing; Mr. John Nicholas Murphy contributed £400; and to these handsome donations were added other gifts from equally generous helpers. As soon as a part of the building was in a habitable condition the first patient, a poor woman, was received; a few days later came a second woman and two men; others followed, and all were lodged in small rooms until the wards could be properly fitted up for their reception. These wards are bright, cheerful apartments, each more than seventy feet in length, the upper floor being appropriated to the men, and the lower to the women. After some time a ward under the title of St. Bridget's, fitted up with nine beds, was opened for children. It was soon filled

with little sufferers, of whom the succession has never since been interrupted.

The building when finished—a massive stone edifice—presented an imposing appearance. Its high situation and southern aspect secured a copious supply of the pure genial air so requisite for the suffering inmates; and the lovely view from the windows and from the grounds was justly reckoned by all who visited the institution among the greatest advantages it could boast of.

In 1873, there were thirty-two beds for patients; and up to the close of 1875, the total number admitted amounted to 230. Although the income available for their support did not exceed £200 a year (the other £100 of the annual income being devoted to rent, insurance, &c.), the charity of the public enabled the nuns to provide the inmates with comforts such as are given in few public institutions. Whenever the purse was nearly emptied replenishment was sure to succeed; so that the keeping up of the establishment came to be considered as a standing miracle.

Nearly all who ended their lives under the roof of St. Patrick's Hospital were blessed with specially happy deaths: a reward no doubt for their patient suffering, and a foretaste it may well be hoped of heavenly joys. The very walls, as the nuns sometimes thought, must have been sanctified by those saintly death-beds which almost reached the dignity of martyrdom. In the Annals of St. Patrick's, as in the tradition of the early church, the memory of the first martyrs is preserved with veneration. Of cancer patients alone, between sixty and seventy were cared for in the hospital. Some of these survived but a few months, while others lingered three or four years. Every variety of this terrible disease was watched and tended by the sisters, whose patients were of every age, from men in the full vigour of the "perfect age" to women of over ninety years; and in almost every case the suffering was accompanied with wonderful grace and consolation, and a sense of gratitude expressed in blessings and prayers poured out on the angels of charity whose lives were devoted to the service of the sadly-stricken ones.

Among the most distressing cases of cancer admitted was that of a fine handsome young man aged thirty-five, a policeman. The disease had first appeared in the finger, and had run through the system with unusual rapidity. When he entered the hospital it had extended up the arm and across the chest and shoulders; and under the arm all the side was eaten away into deep and dreadful-looking cavities. He suffered agony when touched; and it was pitiful to see the expression of anguish on his handsome features as he lay back, propped with pillows, the arm (angry-looking and much bigger than a man's leg) stretched outside the bed-covering. He lingered only five or six weeks from the date of his admission. His

sufferings were excruciating; and being a powerfully-built young fellow, his death-agony was protracted and painful to witness; but his patience and courage held out to the last. When, two hours after death, the sisters went to prepare the body for removal from the ward, they found that the skin of the arm had burst—it was no longer of monstrous size—and myriads of large white worms that had been under the skin were gnawing at the flesh. Basins full of these animals were destroyed, and then the arm lay like a skeleton's, the polished bone being visible. The sister who had charge of him, though by no means easily affected to tears, had to sit down and cry, thinking of all that the poor fellow had gone through.

But the real cause of grief to the community at St. Patrick's was, and still is, that terrible cases have constantly to be denied admission to this last refuge of suffering humanity, because means have not yet been provided for making it what it ought to be—the great hospital for incurables in the south of Ireland.

Happily Mrs. MacCarthy lived to know that St. Patrick's, if it had not reached the development of which it was capable, had at any rate got over its first difficulties and received its 230 patients. The year 1874 was drawing towards the close, and in the following year, according to rule, the delegates of the congregation should assemble once more for the election of a superior-general. The thought of this filled Mrs. MacCarthy with dread. She used to say she could never face it, but that perhaps God would take her before the time came round; and it seemed to console her that others appeared to think there was a possibility that so indeed it might be. Indeed her children became painfully conscious that she was nearing the end of her career.

From the time that she gave herself to God's service in religion her life had been a steady advance from good to better, and from better to the best. She had won the confidence, followed the footsteps, and preserved the traditions of her predecessor. As she advanced in years the gentler qualities of her nature showed out more attractively, and her character took the mellow tints of fruit fast ripening in the autumn sun. Her heart expanded with her office, and she was greatly beloved in the congregation, as well as deeply reverenced. The mantle of the foundress seemed in truth to have fallen on her successor.

Having passed the summer months at the Asylum for the Blind at Merrion, whither she had been removed for the benefit of her health, she returned to the mother-house to die near her beloved novices and in the spot where Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead had spent the last years of her earthly life. She had always viewed death with religious awe, but on its approach it was a strange joy she felt.

From the middle of October, when the last sacraments were administered to her she continued in a sleepless, suffering state. It seemed a physical relief to her to talk, and she who had been habitually reticent, now poured forth her soul in prayer, making aloud acts of unbounded confidence in the mercy of God, through the precious blood of Christ; expressing sentiments of entire conformity to God's holy will, and of readiness to suffer all that it might be His good pleasure to send; and repeating her overflowing sorrow for her sins, not through fear of God's judgments or hope of His rewards, but purely for the love of Him. She dictated lengthened and minute instructions to the superiors of the different houses, and to those placed in offices of authority; and to each sister who came to her she gave some words of advice regarding herself and her office.

In the morning of the 1st of November a great change was visible in her condition. The Rev. Dr. O'Reilly of the Society of Jesus, who was in the house at the time, was asked to come up to her. He did so and gave her absolution. Later in the day his Eminence Cardinal Cullen called and again gave her absolution and the Papal blessing. In the afternoon Monsignor Woodlock, the constant and truly kind friend of the congregation, saw her; he was the last to whom she spoke; and he did not leave the house until she calmly breathed her last sigh while he pronounced the sacred words of absolution over her. Thus, within an hour of midnight, on the great festival of All Saints, departed out of this life Mother Francis Magdalen MacCarthy, Mrs. Aikenhead's cherished friend and disciple, and her worthy successor as superior-general of the congregation of the Irish Sisters of Charity

THE END.

# APPENDIX.

# APPENDIX.

## CONFIRMATIO INSTITUTI SOCIETATIS SORORUM CHARITATIS IN HIBERNIA.

### Gregorius Papa XVI.

### AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.

INTER præclara quæ sæpenumero per Hiberniam allata sunt Religionis amplificandæ, et animarum salutis procurandæ subsidia, illud numerandum jure censemus quod in consilio continetur a pientissimis Hibernis mulieribus suscepto de societate quadam statuenda quæ Sororum Charitatis appellaretur quæque pauperum utilitati et commodo præsertim spirituali se totam devoveret. Factum idcirco est, ut ubi primum fel. rec. Pius VII. prædecessor noster ab Archiepiscopo Dubliniensi Thoma Troy societatis illius canonice erigendæ facultatem rogatus est ejusdem Archiepiscopi commendata solicitudine, copiam fundationis curandæ libenter fuerit impertitus. Eadem animi benignitate item fel. mem. Prædecessores nostri Leo XII. ac Pius VIII. Ven. Fratris Danielis Murray impræsentiarum Dubliniensis Archiepiscopi impensum Religionis studium laudaverunt cum pluries de absolvendo quantocitius posset Regularum ac constitutionum ejusdem Societatis Examine sedem Apostolicam flagitavit. Multo luculentius Nos potuimus de memoratæ societatis utilitate ac meritis efformare judicium longo illo tempore quo antequam licet immerentes ad Divi Petri Cathedram proveheremur sacri consilii Christiano nomini propagando præfecturam gessimus. In quotidiana enim rerum ad Hiberniæ Catholicam gentem pertinentium pertractatione sæpissime nobis occasio oblata est, ut persuaderemur animo Societatem illam optime prorsus de Religione mereri et dignam omnino esse quæ sedis Apostolicæ benevolentia cumularetur. Huic tam diuturno tot annorum de Societatis Sororum Charitatis Dubliniensis meritis experimento accessit singulare illud virtutis et Christianæ fortitudinis testimonium quod religiosissimæ fœminæ Instituto illi addictæ, tota Hibernia Deo gratias referente, exhibuerunt cum teterrimus morbus anno præterito illam regionem invasit et in extremum vitæ periculum permagnam incolarum copiam adduxit, atque ingentem hominum stragem edidit; accepimus enim quanta constantia, quantis laboribus mulieres illæ, nullo mortis ubique impendentis discrimine retardatæ, opem eo morbo correptis tulerint, omne

remedii genus suppeditaverint, morientibus adfuerint, id imprimis adnitentes ut religionis auxilia nemini deessent et ad divinum tribunal animæ peccatis expiatæ pervenirent. Quamobrem quod jamdiu statueramus id sine longiori morâ implendum esse decrevimus ut toties petita constitutionum ac Regularum Societatis Sororum Charitatis Dubliniensis Confirmatio Apostolica auctoritate Nostra tribueretur. De consilio igitur Venerabilium Fratrum nostrorum Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ Cardinalium negotiis Propagandæ Fidei præpositorum, matura etiam consideratione et deliberatione Nostra, Regulas et Constitutiones Sororum Charitatis Dublini Auctoritate Apostolica confirmamus et servandas jubemus. Pientissimas vero mulieres quæ Societatem illam constituunt in Domino hortantes ut in sancto proposito persistant atque alacriori semper studio operibus fungantur quæ ad proximi salutem prosequendam adeo opportuna sunt, Apostolicam Benedictionem peramanter impertimur. Datum Romæ apud Sanctam Mariam Majorem sub annulo Piscatoris, die XXX Augusti, MDCCCXXXIII, Pontificatus Nostri Anno tertio.

PRO DOMINO CARDINALI ALBONI,
*Angelus Picchioni Substitutus.*

THE

# HOUSES OF THE INSTITUTE.

(*From the records of the Congregation of the Irish Sisters of Charity.*)

*First.*

**Convent of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady, Upper Gardiner-street, Dublin,** to which the community of North William-street removed on the 1st of February, 1830, for the purpose of conducting the very extensive Poor Schools there erected by our revered Founder, Protector, and Friend, the Most Reverend Daniel, Archbishop of Dublin. The number of children attending these schools averages from 700 to 750. There are also a Sunday School for grown girls, an evening class to prepare persons for the sacraments, and a Sodality of 250 Children of Mary. The sick-mission occupies four sisters daily. St. Martin's soup-kitchen is attached to the convent, from which more than 120 families derive regular relief, consisting of soup, bread, broken meat, &c., collected through the city; 50 or 60 poor children, and 20 old women receive their breakfast every morning in St. Martin's. Besides about 40 weekly pensioners, 6000 persons receive relief in a more private manner from the convent during the year.

The sisters have undertaken the charge of St. Monica's Widows' House, 12 and 13 Grenville-street, which accommodates 40 inmates. This institution was formerly located in North William-street, and with it is now amalgamated a similar establishment removed from Clarendon-street.

*Second.*

**Convent of the Purification of Our Blessed Lady, Stanhope-street, Dublin,** founded on the 2nd of February, 1819, to which the novitiate was removed from North William-street. To this convent is attached the Institution of St. Mary's Training School, which is an extension in scope and sphere of the House of Refuge, founded in Ash-street, in 1811, by Mrs. John O'Brien, for training and educating young girls of respectable character. Our revered Foundress laboured for its advancement while still

a secular. It was subsequently removed to its present site, with the intention of placing it under the care of the Sisters of Charity, when they should be established in this country. It now provides for 130 girls, of whom a limited number are prepared by higher education for National School Teachers and Nursery Governesses. Mrs. O'Brien's interest in the institution may be said to continue, as she bequeathed to it a sum of money which has enabled the community to extend and improve it. Within the convent grounds are the National Schools of St. Joseph, which 300 children attend daily. The sick-mission takes in five parishes—the poorest in the city. The sisters also attend Grangegorman Prison, and give religious instruction in the Parochial Schools, Queen-street, as well as to a large evening class at the convent. There is a Sodality of the Children of Mary, numbering 575 members.

*Third.*

**Convent of Our Lady of Dolours, Cork,** founded on the 13th of November, 1826, for visiting the sick in hospitals and in their own houses, and attending the female department of the gaols. In 1845, the community undertook the superintendence of the Magdalen Asylum adjoining the new convent to which they had removed. The asylum contained 16 inmates. Since then a beautiful building has been, by the generous co-operation of the citizens of Cork, erected with all modern improvements, affording accommodation for almost 100 penitents. The foundation of this convent was commenced by the Misses Mahony, who endowed it with a maintenance for four sisters. Within the convent grounds are the schools of the Immaculate Conception, under the care of our sisters; these schools were originally erected by the generosity of the Misses O'Regan. They have since been much enlarged, and are now daily attended by 740 children. A work-room has lately been opened for teaching girls such branches of advanced needlework and cutting out as will immediately fit them for earning their bread at home or in houses of business.

The sisters attend the city gaol, visit some of the factories, and have a large sick-mission, a soup-kitchen, and a library for the poor.

*Fourth.*

**Convent of the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady, Sandymount, near Dublin,** founded on the 16th of June, 1831, for the visitation of the sick and the education of poor children. The community removed to Lakelands, in 1877, for the purpose of taking charge of the Industrial School established there under the care of the Carmelite Nuns, and which they wished to resign as incompatible with their life of solitude and prayer. These schools are certified for 70 children; 20 orphans are likewise provided for. The extern schools are attended by about 200 children. The sisters visit the Ringsend National Schools, the City of Dublin Hospital, and the poor of three parishes. Relief in money and food is given to 70 families every week.

*Fifth.*

**St. Mary Magdalen's Asylum, Donnybrook,** established in Townsend-street, Dublin, in 1797, kindly and devotedly superintended by Miss Ryan, niece to the Most Rev. John Thomas Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, until a religious community should be found ready to take it up.

It was placed under the care of the Sisters of Charity on the 25th of January, 1833, and removed to its present site in 1837. Large buildings have lately been added, which enabled the sisters to increase the number of penitents admitted to 100. The Incurable Hospital, Donnybrook, is visited by the community. Within the grounds of this establishment is situated the cemetery of the congregation, where repose, biding the time of her happy resurrection, the precious remains of our beloved foundress, in a crypt under a beautiful limestone cross, erected by John H. Parker, Esq.

*Sixth.*

St. Vincent's Hospital, Stephen's-green, Dublin, founded on the 23rd of January, 1834; opened with ten beds available for the sick. The original house (formerly the residence of the Earl of Meath) was the gift of Miss Letitia O'Ferrall of Ballyna, county Kildare. It has since been gradually enlarged to afford accommodation for 120 patients. The purchase of the adjoining house in the present year (1879) gives a large additional ward, and affords accommodation for the resident surgeon, and two medical pupils. A large convalescent home has also been taken for its patients (see Linden). This institution is supported by public charity alone, with the exception of an annual grant from the corporation of £300. Its rank in a medical point of view is primarily due to the untiring exertion and genius of the late Dr. O'Ferrall of Merrion-square, whose medical skill and almost filial devotedness were also, under God, the means of prolonging the valuable life of our revered foundress for at least twenty-five years—boons for which the congregation must ever feel grateful.

A bust of our foundress has been erected in the hall of the institution by her true and early friend, the late Richard Annesly Simpson, Esq., of Fitzwilliam-square.

*Seventh.*

Convent of Our Lady of Charity, Waterford, founded on the 16th of June, 1842, for visiting the sick and instructing the poor. The children attending its extensive schools number between five and six hundred. The orphanage attached to it contains and provides for 70 children. The Sodality of the Children of Mary numbers 324. Besides the large sick-mission the sisters visit the Leper Hospital, the Holy Ghost House, Fanning's Institution, as well as all the Catholic and mixed institutions of this most charitable city, except the workhouse, which is now under the care of another religious community, the Sisters of Mercy.

*Eighth.*

Convent of Our Lady of Mercy (called Our Lady's Priory) Clarinbridge, county Galway, founded on the 16th of June, 1844, for visiting the sick, and to which is attached poor schools, the number of children attending being about 200. The Sodality of the Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart, for men, and that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for women, the first numbering 630 members, and the second 300, were established in 1870, with the special blessing of the Holy Father, and have been productive of extraordinary good. The Sodality of the Children of Mary is likewise very flourishing. This house and its beautifully-

appointed Gothic chapel are the gifts of Mrs. Francis Xavier Redington of Kilcornan, county Galway, with an endowment for the maintenance of five sisters. The adjoining ground (about twelve acres) is the gift of her son, Sir Thomas Redington. The remains of Mrs. Redington rest within the convent grounds.

*Ninth.*

**Convent of the Presentation of Our Blessed Lady (called Our Lady's Mount), Harold's Cross, near Dublin,** founded on the 14th of September, 1845, for the purpose of removing thither the novitiate. Our revered foundress built extensive poor schools, and afterwards the beautiful little Gothic church of the Presentation, in which have been erected to her memory two stained-glass windows—one by Messrs. Beardwood, Westland-row; the other by Messrs. Browne and Nolan, Nassau-street. The number of children attending the day school averages about 230. There is also an evening school for young women of the neighbouring factories well and regularly attended. The sisters give religious instruction in six National schools in the city and its environs, and visit Mercer's hospital three times weekly. The James's-street National Schools are managed by the sisters of this house, and the Sodality of the Children of Mary belonging to this convent numbers 680 members. Here our beloved Foundress passed the last twelve years of her life, and after a painful and protracted illness surrendered her precious spirit to God.

*Tenth.*

**Convent of Our Lady of Angels, Clonmel, county Tipperary,** founded on the 2nd of October, 1845, for visiting the sick, and to which are attached extensive poor schools, erected by the Very Rev. Dr. Burke, P.P., V.G. The number of children attending these schools exceeds 400. There is also a night school for those who are otherwise occupied during the day. An orphanage in connection with the convent was opened in March, 1876, which provides at present for 31 children.

Besides the sick-mission, the sisters visit the gaol and the hospital attached to it, as well as the workhouse. In the latter, which they attend daily, they have been able to do much good in rescuing young girls from a life of sin and misery. The Sodality of the Children of Mary is large, fervently attended, and productive of most edifying results.

*Eleventh.*

**St. Mary's Asylum for the Blind, Merrion, county Dublin,** founded on the 18th of August, 1858, by the Very Rev. Monsignor Yore, V.G., in Lower Dominick-street, whence, in 1859, it was transferred to Portobello, and finally to its present beautiful site on the 14th of August, 1868. From small beginnings it has increased so far as to afford accommodation for 120 blind, chiefly young people, who receive a thoroughly good education, and are trained to such branches of industry as their condition admits of. They excel in music, both vocal and instrumental, the cultivation of which has been found of immense service in softening the privation consequent upon loss of sight. An industrial school certified for 100 children was annexed to the convent on the 10th of June, 1872.

The sisters have also undertaken to provide books for the humbler classes by means of a lending library.

*Twelfth.*

**Convent of Our Lady of the Annunciation, Kilkenny,** founded by Mr. John Scott, for the visitation of the sick and the instruction of the poor, &c., on the 6th of August, 1861. It was first established in James's-street, and removed to its present site, Deansby, now called St. Joseph's, on the 14th September, 1873. A large industrial school is attached to it, certified for 95 children. There is an extensive sick mission in the city and country; the sisters visit the prison, the county infirmary, three asylums for old men and women, and give religious instruction in three National schools. They have also a Sodality of the Children of Mary under their care.

*Thirteenth.*

**Convent of Our Lady of Benada, county Sligo,** founded on the 28th of August, 1862, by Father Daniel Jones, S.J., for the visitation of the sick, and to which a poor school is attached attended by 150 children. The sisters attend the churches of their own and the adjacent parishes to give religious instruction to the children and prepare them for a worthy reception of the sacraments. Their first communion and confirmation classes are very largely attended by boys and girls. They also visit the Tubbercurry Workhouse. Their mission extends many miles round the country, and their beautiful little church is open to the public and very fervently attended.

*Fourteenth.*

**St. Joseph's Female Orphanage, Mountjoy-street, Dublin,** established in Wellington-street in the year 1770, was placed under the care of the Sisters of Charity, by the Very Rev. Canon MacMahon, its guardian, on the 26th of March, 1866. This institution, which is entirely dependent on the charity of the faithful, shelters and provides for 100 orphans. To it are likewise attached day schools under the National Board of Education attended by 280 children; and an evening school, also under the Board, wherein about 90 children receive secular and religious instruction.

In this house reside the sisters who conduct the convent National schools of King's Inns-street, which number on their rolls over 1,000 pupils. These schools supply the district with teachers. They also at times furnish more than twenty qualified teachers in a year. Many of their young people, from their superior education have been received into convents as choir nuns. The better class of children who show talent, or to whom such instruction may prove useful in gaining a livelihood are taught, without extra charge, the piano, harmonium, and organ, as well as singing, French, drawing, and painting. In some of these branches they have made wonderful proficiency. Their illuminations for public addresses, &c. &c., have obtained for them the highest commendations. Their rendering of the Cecilian music is most successful. These branches are only taught to pupils in the advanced classes, or to those who have been long attending the schools. A class is now preparing for the Intermediate Examinations, some of whom are to present themselves in five subjects.

*Fifteenth.*

**The Convalescent Home, Linden, Blackrock, county Dublin,** founded in June, 1866, for the patients of St. Vincent's Hospital. It originated in the generosity of Francis Coppinger, Esq., of Monkstown Castle, who purchased the house for the purpose. The institution has been

of inestimable advantage to a very suffering class, and through it, under God, the lives of many have been preserved, who, had they returned immediately upon leaving hospital to their unhealthy homes and hard work must have sunk again into disease.

It is entirely dependent on St. Vincent's Hospital and public charity for its support. The "Mullins Institution," founded by the bequest of the late Bernard Mullins, Esq., of Merrion-square, on the 1st of March, 1878, has been erected on the grounds and placed under the care of the sisters. This institution receives convalescent patients from eight of the city hospitals, who are supported without any charge to the public.

*Sixteenth.*

**Convent of Our Lady, Star of the Sea, Tramore, county Waterford,** founded by Mr. William Carroll on the 24th of June, 1866, for the visitation of the sick and the education of poor children. The schools attached to it are attended by nearly 200. There is a Sunday school for grown girls and women, and also a Sodality of the Children of Mary. From 50 to 60 children get breakfast at the schools during the winter months, and clothes are given to those who most need them. Besides the sick-mission, a large number of poor families receive relief from the convent. There is a good lending library attached.

*Seventeenth.*

**Convent of the Visitation, Baldoyle, county Dublin,** founded on the 2nd of July, 1869, for the visitation of the sick and instruction of the poor. Large schools were subsequently built through the generosity of Blanche Lady Fitzgerald, aided by the congregation, which are attended by about 170 children. There is an extensive sick-mission extending along the coast from Howth to near Malahide, and on the other side of the peninsula from Sutton to the Junction. The sisters attend the National schools of Howth, Kinsealy, and Portmarnock, for religious instruction. The Children of Mary number 100.

A lending library for the poor is attached to the convent.

*Eighteenth.*

**St. Patrick's Hospital, Wellington-road, Cork,** founded on the 14th of September, 1870. This institution owes its origin to the charity of Dr. Patrick Murphy, who, by his will, left all his property, household and chattel, to the Sisters of Charity for the endowment in perpetuity of a hospital or room (ward) for the reception of cancer patients. By the sale of the chattels a sum was realised which contributed towards the purchase of the ground and the building of the hospital—the remainder of the required sum being furnished by the benefactions of generous friends. The hospital contains 50 beds, of which a certain number are devoted to the carrying out of the intentions of the founder. The remainder are for incurable cases of various kinds (a patient once admitted can remain for life), unless in the children's ward where acute cases are taken, as well as those which require long and patient treatment, such as spinal diseases—the unfailing charity of the citizens contributing to their support, as the sum left by Dr. Murphy only suffices for the maintenance of the poor sufferers who were the object of his pious solicitude, namely, the cancer patients. Besides hospital duties, the community attend the two parochial schools for religious instruction, visit the sick-poor, and instruct the children of Catholic soldiers attending the Barrack school, who are conducted to the convent twice weekly for religious teaching.

*Nineteenth.*

**The Children's Hospital, 15 Upper Temple-street, Dublin,** was founded, in 1873, by Mrs. Thomas Woodlock in Upper Buckingham-street, Dublin, and placed under the care of the Sisters of Charity on the 2nd of July, 1876. The lease having expired in the present year (1879) advantage was taken of the opportunity to remove the hospital to a more central position and a more commodious house. It hitherto contained 21 beds, and will now be able to double that number. The cases annually treated in its wards have hitherto averaged 288—while 2,610 cases have been on an average prescribed for in the dispensary. It is altogether dependent on public generosity for the means of preserving the young lives of its very helpless little patients.

*Twentieth.*

**Convent of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Friar's-hill, Ballahaderin, county Mayo,** founded on the 25th of April, 1877. It was built partly by the bequest of £3,000 of the late Col. G. Gore Ousley Higgins, and partly by the noble generosity of the Bishop of Achonry, Most Rev. Dr. M'Cormack, and that of other devoted friends and subscribers in the vicinity, and endowed by the life interest of the sister of the testator in the estate Spacious schools are at present in course of erection, in which it is proposed to teach the children not alone the ordinary branches of education, but such useful arts that will prepare them for a life of industry. Under the fostering care of the Bishop and other friends, the convent has rapidly advanced in its great object. Besides a large sick-mission the sisters visit the National schools of the town as well as more distant ones for religious instruction, and have large classes in the cathedral and neighbouring churches.

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AND THE

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This list in The Irish Monthly. Rev Matthew Russell. S.J.
Editor

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